

The First Letter of Paul the Apostle to Timothy

Adult Bible Study

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Holy Comforter - St. Cyprian Parish

I. Introductory remarks

- A. The letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon stand apart from the other letters of Paul in that they are not addressed to a community, they are addressed to individuals. Since they are private, rather than public letters, they have a different style. They exude a warmth and personal touch. We have here a spiritual father addressing a son in certain matters at hand.
- B. That these letters are addressed to individuals and not the community does not mean that there is not ecclesiastical significance to them. For example, Paul stated the purpose of his letter to Timothy as follows: *that you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God which is the Church of the living God.* (1 Tim 3:15). Paul essentially addresses himself to the issue of ecclesiastical discipline. Thus, much insight into the proper ordering of the Church community is to be gained by reading these letters.
- C. The letters have come to acquire the title: Pastoral Epistles since they were composed as a pastoral rule of sorts. The letters deal with the organization of the flock of God, how God's household should be administered, how men and women should behave, what qualities the leaders of the Church should have, and how to deal with threats to the purity of Christian doctrine.
- D. The Letters also provide a historical picture of life in the early Church. We can especially profit from this glimpse into the life of the after or study of the Acts of the Apostles last year. The picture that emerges is of a Church that is growing but also one that is surrounded by the seductive threats of paganism. Many of the early Christians were only recently converted from this life and it was easy for them to slip back. Hence Paul urges a vigilance upon Timothy and Titus, lest their flock be led astray by doctrinal error or moral laxity.
- E. These letters depict a Church that is highly structured, even at this early stage. In fact the structure is so highly developed that some scholars (especially Protestant ones) will conclude that these letters could not have come from the hand of Paul. Their presumption is that the structured Church had to have come later and that the early days would have seen a more "charismatic" church less bound by hierarchy and structures. Their presumption of course is an a priori one. They presume what the early Church ought to have been like based upon their pre-conceived ideas and then reject the actual historical data since it does not conform to their idea. Most scholars however accept the Pauline authorship and the portrait of the Church presented.
- F. Some of the structural components we see in the early Church are
 1. Bishops
 2. Priests (elders) 1 Tim 5:17-19; Titus 1:5-6
 3. Deacons 1 Tim 3:8-13
 4. An order of widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

G. The concept of faith evident here is a bit more specific in meaning than in Paul's other epistles. Although those Letters did not overlook doctrine as an important and integral component to that faith, the more obvious stress was that faith was a personal adherence to Jesus Christ. Faith was loving and trustful adherence to the person of Jesus Christ and, by extension to what he did and taught. In these letters however, the emphasis shifts more to the doctrinal content that must be believed by the person of faith. Thus, "departing from the faith" became synonymous with the acceptance of false doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1). The Good Christian must be nourished by the words of faith and sound doctrine. (1 Tim 4:6). Here then is developed especially the notion of orthodoxy: straight, correct thinking in terms of the deposit of faith.

II. Background issues

A. Who was Timothy? - Timothy was a native of Lystra, a city in Asia Minor. He was the son of a Greek Father and a Jewish-Christian mother: Eunice. Paul took Timothy as an associate when he passed through Lystra on his second Missionary journey. One of the outstanding qualities of Timothy was his loyalty to Paul and the degree to which Paul depended on him. Although he was usually with Paul, sometimes he would remain behind for a time (as at Berea) or be sent as a courier and representative (for example to Corinth). He was also sent to Thessalonika and reported back on the situation there prior to the writing of the letters to the Thessalonians. Hebrews 13:23 also alludes to brief imprisonment of Timothy. Finally, in his last journey, Paul put Timothy in Charge of the church at Ephesus (1 Tim 4:12 & 2 Tim 2:22).

B. Ephesus - The city of Ephesus was the capitol of Asia Minor (Modern day Turkey). It was a great commercial and religious center. Ephesus was renowned in the ancient world for its temple and cult of Artemis and for its cadre of magicians. The temple was huge and considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. There was a stadium, a racetrack, and a theater that seated 24,000(!) There were also libraries and market places. All in all the city was magnificent and crowned by a grand columnaded main street. The temple was the central attraction There were also numerous silversmiths who plied quite a trade in their idol making for the cult of Artemis. In Acts they rose up in riot against Paul who was cutting into their business. Paul had been in Ephesus briefly in 52 AD and then came back and spent almost three years there from 54-57 AD. The whole riot of the silversmiths was the cause of his hasty departure. Nevertheless he left a flourishing Christian community there. It was to the Christian community in this huge, bustling city of the ancient world that Timothy would be appointed Bishop. It can be seen that the influence of paganism was great in this city. And, like many cites that were commercial crossroads, they were also a crossroads for ideas and philosophies. Hence, Timothy had his work cut out for him. The city was large and the negative influences were larger. We can see why Paul insists so strongly on correct doctrine and exhorts Timothy to insist upon it as well as to stress the importance of living a moral upright life. He exhorts Timothy to guard carefully and keep intact the deposit of faith entrusted to him (1 Tim 6:20) He must devote himself to instructing the faithful (1 Tim 6:16) and be convinced that the Church is the bulwark of truth (1 Tim 3:15). False doctrines are to be vigorously rejected

and their promoters refuted (1 Tim 1:3). However, although Timothy has to be sure to exercise his authority, he must also, in his personal life be a model for his flock (1 Tim 6:11) and put his trust in divine mercy (1 Tim 1:15). In the end, the practice of virtue is the true warfare, likewise holding the faith and possessing a good conscience (1 Tim 1:18-19) These are important lessons for us as well who live in an age of communication where fads, philosophies, and negative influences abound. Emotional, touchy-feely Christianity is not enough. We must know what our Lord teaches and be able to clearly distinguish the truth from falsehood and error. Otherwise we are too easily swallowed up by the evil and confusion of the day.

C. What is the heresy that threatens the Church? Although we can broadly describe the heresy which Paul and Timothy (and the Church) face as Gnosticism, we must be careful to say that it is a Gnosticism in its incipient or infant stages. It is not here the full blown organized system of thought it would later become in the Second Century. Here are some of the qualities of the heresy Paul and Timothy fight.

1. Speculative intellectualism - there was an excessive focusing on questions that were often silly, pointless or unanswerable. It was that type of thinking that we have come to criticize today by invoking the example of certain philosophers of the middle ages who would debate about how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. Thus this heresy dealt with foolish and unlearned questions (2 Tim 2:23) which the heretics clung to by endless debate (1 Tim 6:4). These individuals considered themselves intellectuals and they split hairs endlessly.
2. Pride - the heretic is proud although he knows little or nothing (1 Tim 6:4) It appears that these intellectuals thought that ordinary slobs could not grasp salvation because they were too simple-minded. They tried to make the greatest blessings of Christianity the exclusive possession of a chosen few.
3. Asceticism - the heretics had special food laws forgetting that everything God has made is good (1 Tim 4:4-5). They listed many things as impure and thus stayed away from them (Titus 1:15) They also tended to denounce sex as something dirty and they thus belittled marriage.
4. However, some seem to have concluded that since the body was dirty and sex along with it, it made no difference if the sexual passion was indulged in. After all, since matter and the body was already evil, it made little difference whether the passions were indulged or not.
5. Word, tales and genealogies - it was full of godless chatter, useless controversies (1 Tim 1:7). produced endless genealogies (1 Tim 1:4; Titus 3:9) and produced myths and fables (1 Tim 1:4; Titus 1:14)
6. They denied the resurrection of the body - remember, they considered the body and the material world to be evil. Hence it made no sense for the body to rise since death was a liberation of the soul from matter. The Gnostics looked forward to the destruction of the body not its resurrection!
7. Paul's basic analysis on this heresy is as follows: He warns about the false teachers and declares that their teachings are intellectually suspect (1:4),

spiritually profitless (1:5-6) and morally damaging (1:5-11) They are also antinomian (i.e. they speak against the Law). The whole situation leads to controversies and endless discussions that lead people away from the truth of the Gospel. Paul insists on the importance of the God-given Law. The law exposes sin (1:8-10) which is always likely to be minimized, excused or ignored. These teachers may have reduced the intentionally forceful moral impact of, say, the Ten Commandments by allegorizing them or by suggesting that the Christian is "under grace" and not subject to the law. But the Law is not dismissed by the Gospel. The Law illustrates God's holiness and compassionate concern; precisely identifies our rebellion; exposes our inability to live for God without the Gospel and provides a basic code of behavior essential for the well being of a clean, secure caring community. Those who ignore law soon despise grace.

III. A General overview of the Letter -

- A. The situation - When Paul sailed for Greece he left Timothy in Charge of the Church at Ephesus. It proved to be a difficult task for the young, timid but devoted colleague who also seems not to have been in the best health or at least had a delicate composition. Once Paul's strong leadership was removed from the scene false teachers of an incipient Gnosticism began to intensify their activities.
- B. The General outline of the Letter
 1. Greeting 1:1-2
 2. False teachers 1:3-20
 - a. description of the false teachers of the Law 1:3-7
 - b. the meaning and value of the Law 1:8-11
 - c. the call of the apostle to preach the Gospel 1:12-17
 - d. Combat against the false teachers 1:18-20
 3. Problems of discipline 2:1-3:16
 - a. Public worship, prayer for all people, the position of men and women in worship 2:1-15
 - b. Qualities of Bishops and deacons 3:1-13
 - c. The divine mystery entrusted to the Church 3:14-16
 4. Practices of false teachers 4:1-11
 - a. certain false prohibitions and false attitude toward creatures 4:1-5
 - b. method of combating these practices 4:6-11
 5. Counsels to Timothy 4:12-6:2
 - a. Exemplary life and diligence in his work 4:12-16
 - b. how to deal with different ages and groups: widows, elders, slaves 5:1-6:2
 6. Conclusion 6:3-21
 - a. vices of false teachers 6:3-10
 - b. exhortation to Timothy 6:11-16
 - c. right use of wealth 6:17-19
 - d. final recommendation and warning 6:20-21

IV. Chapter 1

A. Greeting - *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, {2} To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

1. *Apostle* - the word comes from the Greek word *apostellein* which means to send out. Thus an *apostolos* was one who was sent out as an envoy or ambassador. The twelve Apostles were thus ambassadors or representatives of Jesus. There is a special office involved here. It was granted only to a few. As we read in Luke 6:13 *And when it was day, he called his disciples, and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles.* It is also true that when Peter decided with the other apostles that Judas' office had to be filled there were certain qualities that had to be evident in the man who was chosen: *So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us -- one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection...And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was enrolled with the eleven apostles* Acts 1:21-22,26. How is it then that Paul takes this title unto himself? Note that he indicates it was by the command of God our Savior that he is an Apostle. Paul insists on his authority and equality with the other Apostles on account of this. (Galatians 1) *Paul an apostle -- not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead... {11} For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel...{15} But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, {16} was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, {17} nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. {18} Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. {19} But I saw none of the other apostles except James...* Thus Paul saw the risen Lord and was especially set apart as an ambassador of the risen Christ and was sent (*apostelein*) to the Gentiles. This too we read in Acts: *Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." {11} And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying, {12} and he has seen a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." {13} But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; {14} and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy name." {15} But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; Acts 9:10-15* Lastly, although there was some flexibility in very early days of the

Church about the use of the title Apostle, is rather quickly came to be restricted to the 12 and to Paul. Those whom the Apostles empowered to act in their names or succeed them (they conferred this power by the laying on of hands) and would be called *episcopoi* (bishops or overseers). It was the bishops who took up the office of the apostles after they departed this life.

2. ***God our Savior*** - This is an unusual turn of a phrase only because we are used to calling Jesus our savior. But remember, Jesus is God and God is one. Hence, when Jesus saves us it is a work of the whole Trinity. There are other biblical uses of this phrase. For example Psalm 90: *Let us shout for Joy before the Rock who saves us.* Psalm 24:5 bids us to rejoice in the God of our salvation and in Luke 1:46 Mary declares, *My soul magnifies the Lord and my soul rejoices in God my savior.* The other thing this phrase helps us to avoid in any sense that the Father was exacting vengeance for our sin upon his Son. We must understand that God so loved us, that he sent his Son into the world to save us. Thus, it is God, Father, Son and Spirit, who acts to save us.
3. ***Christ Jesus our hope*** Christ is our hope not only because he has opened the gates of paradise for us but also because he shows us that holiness is possible in human form. He is also our hope since he shows us the final conquest of good over evil, strength in weakness, and life through death. Lastly, since Hope (as defined theologically) is the confident expectation of God's help in attaining salvation, we see in Christ the literal incarnation of God's desire that we be saved and His absolute offer to assist us in attaining it if we but yield to His power.
4. ***To Timothy, my true child in the faith*** - Paul always speaks with great affection of Timothy. It is common for Paul to speak of Timothy of his son although he was not literally so. For example in 1 Cor 4:17 he writes of Timothy, *I have sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord.* And to the Philippians (2:20,22) he writes, *I have no one like him...as a son with a father he has served me in the gospel.* Timothy's natural parents were a Greek pagan father (name unknown) and Eunice a Jew who converted to the Christian faith. Thus Paul speaks of himself as a father to Timothy in a spiritual manner. He is a spiritual father since he converted Timothy to the faith during the first missionary journey, (ca 47 AD) This is important in addressing a criticism of certain Protestants against the Catholic Church. Consider the following question and answer.
 - a. Q. We call our priests, "Father." But Jesus teaches in the Bible that we must call no man on earth "father" (Matt 23:9). Why then, when the Bible is so clear, do most Catholics persist in the practice? For my part I accept the Lord's word so strongly that I have even ceased to refer my earthly father by that title. I call him my "daddy."
 - b. Answer: In all charity I would like to suggest that your solution in regard to your earthly father is legalistic. Your father by any other name is still your father. In addition, your solution is not a

principle used in scripture itself. In the New Testament alone there are 195 uses of the word "father(s)" to refer to earthly fathers. Hence it seems clear that to understand our Lord's word in so radically literal a way (as you apparently do) is not supported by the practice evident in scripture. This still leaves the question of the Catholic use of the title "father" for priests. The title is meant in different ways. In one sense it is meant as an affectionate family term. Parishes strive to model themselves as a family and thus use family terms such as "brother," and "sister" for men and women religious, "mother" for the superior of a group of religious sisters, and "father" for priests. It is also proper to observe how priests imitate biological fathers in a spiritual way. Just as fathers give life, food, encouragement and instruction, so priests give us these things in the spiritual order. They confer spiritual life by God's power at the baptismal font give food through the Eucharist and meet other spiritual needs through the other sacraments and by instruction and encouragement. Thus, by analogy, we call priests "father." In this sense St. Paul referred to himself as a father: *"...you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (1 Cor 4:15) For you know how, like a father with his children we exhorted and charged each one of you to lead a life worthy of God (1 Thess 2:10) Timothy...as a son with a father has served me in the gospel. (Phil 2:22)* Here we can see how calling priests "father," in this sense, is not against Biblical principles. In the passage you cite, Jesus is surely emphasizing that God is pre-eminent. No earthly father, biological or spiritual, can ever over-rule or take the place of the heavenly Father. God is ultimately the Father of all fathers and we can never call any man "father" like we call God, "Father." St. Paul declares, *I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named (Eph 3:14-15)*. To this, every faithful Catholic, will answer a hearty, Amen.

5. **Grace** - The word grace can mean a number of things. It can mean outward beauty, winsomeness, or sweetness. The English word that best captures it is "charm" It can also mean "gift" as in the opposite of a debt. A grace is something freely given, no strings attached. This is always the case with God's blessing: we can never do anything so as to deserve God's favor or put him in our debt. He always acts out of sheer gratuity and unconditional love.
6. **Peace** was the usual Jewish greeting, Shalom. The word conveys more than the mere absence of conflict. It conveys the wish that we may have the most comprehensive form of well-being: the right-relationship of a person with creation and all other people.
7. **Mercy** - Paul uses this word in his greeting only here, to Timothy. Again, the biblical use of the word is richer than in English today. The Hebrew word is *Hesed* (=loving kindness) is translated here by its Greek

component *eleos*. Both biblical words express God's steadfast love and help in time of need. Hence the meaning of the word goes beyond the usual meaning of the English word which emphasizes God's forgiving love. The Greek and Hebrew words include this notion but extend it more widely.

8. ***God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord*** - Note here the equivalence between Jesus and the Father. Although, to the untrained eye, it may appear that the Father is called God and Jesus is only called Lord, there is more at work here. The Greek word for Lord is *Kyrios*. When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek (a version called the Septuagint) the word used to translate the name of God, YAHWEH, was *Kyrios*. Hence, Lord is understood here as more than a title, it is the divine name: Jesus our *Kyrios*, Jesus our Yahweh, Jesus our God.

B. Error and Heresy - ***As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, {4} nor to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith; {5} whereas the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith. {6} Certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away into vain discussion, {7} desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions.***

1. Paul gets right down to business. He is concerned that Timothy remember an essential task: the maintenance of sound doctrine. It is clear, from Paul's words that there is a heresy afflicting the Church at Ephesus and he wants to advise Timothy on how to recognize it and how to deal with it. First he gives a cursory description of two the errors involved.
 - a. they ***occupy themselves with myths*** - one of the preoccupations of the ancient world was myth. Poets, even historians, loved to work out romantic and fictitious tales about the foundation of cities and families. There were tales about how gods came and founded cities or how a certain important family was actually the union of some mortal and a god or goddess. Evidently the Ephesian Christians were tending in this direction and indulging in these idle myths and putting some credence in them. Clearly God is the creator of all things and *the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named* (Eph 3:14-15)
 - b. ***Endless genealogies*** - It may seem odd to us, but the ancient world had a passion for genealogies. Usually when the long genealogies in Matt. and Luke are read, eyes glaze over in modern parishes. But the ancient world would perk up and listen attentively. The Old Testament also has a lot of "begat" passages. There is a value in such matters but they must be kept in perspective. Further, many genealogies in the ancient were pure fabrications to bolster a person's pedigree. This was especially the case with Greek aristocracy which had to have at least a few gods in their family

tree.

c. *speculations* - Here we get into the origins of a philosophy that would later come to be called Gnosticism. It is not essentially clear at what stage of development Gnosticism was here when Paul critiques it. Nevertheless the basic tenets of Gnosticism can be set forth as follows. They believed that in religion there is a common faith which may be sufficient for ordinary people. But there is also a higher knowledge reserved to the learned which offers philosophical explanations for the basic questions of life (e.g. the existence of evil) and the faith (who is God and how does he act). In effect the Gnostics taught that

- (1) God is an inaccessible Being who can have no contact outside of himself. Opposed to God, but co-eternal with him is matter which is bad in its nature.
- (2) Between God and matter is an intermediate, world inhabited by beings called aeons
- (3) One of the aeons, called the demiurge worked matter into the actual form of this world. Many Jewish and Christian Gnostics equate the demiurge with the God of the Old Testament.
- (4) A divine spark from the superior world fell one day on the matter of this world of ours and remains here to suffer as in a prison. An example of this is souls which are imprisoned in the body.
- (5) Another of the aeons descended to this world and took the appearance (and only the appearance) of a body and lived and died to free the spirit from matter. Christian Gnostics obviously equated this aeon with Christ.
- (6) Side by side with these theories there was a moral teaching which went to two extremes. Either there was an austere asceticism (matter was evil therefore resist making any use of it) or there was a moral laxity (matter, and the body, were already evil, it did not matter what one did with the body. Indulging an already evil body was no big deal). Just guess which version was more common.
- (7) In its later forms Gnosticism constituted a very serious threat to Christianity. A false religion that used its "ethical" insights to justify immorality was appealing to many.

d. There is an insight into the mind of certain heretics here as well. Remember the word heresy comes from a Greek word meaning "to choose." Thus heretics frequently choose a certain truth and exaggerate it at the expense of other teachings. Here we see this in numerous ways.

- (1) The heretics described here are driven by an intense desire for novelty, the latest craze, the latest fad. The Church does have the obligation of presenting ancient truths in new and

fresh ways but some will never be satisfied. Thus in our times we have a "new age" movement, goddess worship, and so forth.

- (2) Further, the heretic often exults in speculation at the expense of experience. Christianity demands faith in things unseen but not in a manner that is directly contrary to reason or experience.
 - (3) The heretics described here deal in argument over action. They forget that the truth is not only something we must accept with our minds but something which must be translated to action and affect the way we live. Certainly knowledge of the faith is essential but the knowledge must move beyond the abstract and affect the way we act.
 - (4) In addition, although they issue dogmatic certainties, they do not really know what they are talking about or understand the significance of what they teach. Here too, Christians need to maintain a balance. There are certitudes of faith but sometimes that category is overextended or certain individuals propose "truths" that are really off target. They do not submit their truths to the full test of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church. In any other field of study, dogmatic statements are put to the test by experts and other practitioners. If the claim fails to stand the necessary discernment and tests the theory is dismissed or refuted. But, for some reason many individual Christians today take a very individualistic attitude to the faith and "pontificate" on matters that they don't often understand very well. Again, balance is necessary: the faith is not to be abandoned to the realm of the experts, but there is a role for scholarship and teaching authority in the Church.
 - (5) Finally, we can also see from the wider look we took at Gnosticism that there was an arrogance involved. These heretics tended to look down their noses and regard as ignorant those who could not follow their wild speculations. Again the Christian should be possessed of a certainty about the truth of his faith but combine it with a gentle humility.
- e. To these three problems Paul says, "Stick to the meat and potatoes Gospel...Stick to *the divine training that is in faith*. To become preoccupied with myths and genealogies is to be distracted by non-essentials and overlook the essential. The Church has always sought to ensure that religious instruction covers the basics of the faith and does so simply and clearly. This saves time and avoids the confusion that can result from people being offered theories which are marginal to the faith, or speculation which is unsound.

- f. ***the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith.*** - Paul's advice to Timothy also implies certain things about orthodoxy and how we should think as well.
- (1) Thinking must be based on faith. The orthodox person takes God and his word seriously. Hence the Christian's thinking is based in revelation.
 - (2) Thinking must be motivated by love. This love preserves the Christian from arrogance or contempt which seeks merely to defeat an opponent rather than to win him. Likewise, as St. Thomas explains, "Those who do not hold the true faith cannot love God, for a person who believes things about God that are untrue no longer loves God."¹ At best, he would love a caricature of God.
 - (3) Thinking must come from a pure heart. A pure heart means that there are no mixed motives. The pure motive is the love of the truth and the desire that all people come to share it.
 - (4) Thinking must come from a good conscience. To have a good conscience is to be able to look into the truth with no one but oneself and not be ashamed. The Christian cannot speak with authority unless his deeds match his words.
 - (5) The Christian thinker must be sincere. There must be no phoniness, no acting, no hypocrisy.
- g. All these qualities, Timothy must seek to inculcate in his people.
- C. ***The Role of the Law - Now we know that the law is good, if any one uses it lawfully, {9} understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, {10} immoral persons, sodomites, kidnapers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, {11} in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.***
1. ***Now we know that the law is good, if any one uses it lawfully, {9} understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just*** - The place of the law is to deal with evil-doers. The good person does not need the law since he already keeps what the law prescribes. In a world of good people there would be no need for law at all. The good do without external control the good deeds that others do because of fear of laws. Thus, if we love God we do what he commands because we love him rather than because his law constrains us.
 2. Paul next goes on to list a number of types of sinners and paint a portrait of the atmosphere in which the early Christians had to dwell.
 - a. ***lawless*** - This does not refer to those who are unschooled in the law but to those who know the law but break it deliberately on account of their own motives and ambitions

¹Commentary on Timothy, ad loc.

- b. ***disobedient*** - these are unruly and insubordinate. They refuse to obey any authority. They are either too proud or too unbridled to accept any control of their actions
- c. ***the ungodly*** - not those who are only without a sense of God but those who engage in an active irreligion. They defiantly withhold from God what is his due and despise God and everything related to Him.
- d. ***sinners*** - Obviously we are all sinners but the Greek word *hamartoloi* describes more the person who has no moral standards left.
- e. ***the unholy*** - The Greek word *anosios* indicated a person who was worse than a mere lawbreaker but a person who violated the ultimate decencies of life, treading on family ties, and the natural law.
- f. ***profane*** - profane means worldly as opposed to sacred. Thus this term refers to the man who desecrates God's day, disobeys his Laws and belittles worship.
- g. ***murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers***, - the phrase can be translated as, those who strike or even kill their parents. These words describe not only literal murderers of parents but also those lost to gratitude for their parents, lost to respect for them. The most cruel blows come not upon the body but those on the heart.
- h. ***manslayers*** - remember that Jesus widened the notion of murder to include not only the literal taking of life but also to acts of anger directed toward them.
- i. ***immoral persons*** - the Greek word, *pornoi* is rendered more literally as fornicators. It is unfortunate that the RSV translation we are using frequently translated *pornoi* as immorality. This is a rather vague translation of the word which is more vivid and clear in the Greek. Fornicators dishonor marriage, their own body and the body of their partner. The ancient, pagan world was really a mess in this regard. They often tied fornication to pagan religious practice. The pagan Temple of Aphrodite (The goddess of love) at Corinth had 1000 "sacred" prostitutes who plied their trade under religious auspices.
- j. ***sodomites*** - the Greek word is *arsenokoitai* which means homosexuals. Homosexual acts are thus to be condemned. We must be clear that those with homosexual tendencies must not be considered condemned. They are called to live chastely and, if they do, they incur no guilt for their orientation. Hence the sin condemned is homosexual acts of any kind which generically can be described as sodomy.
- k. ***kidnappers*** - The Greek word *andrapodistai* literally means, "Kidnappers of slaves" They would then be resold. This was a common problem in the ancient world and caused great hardship to the slave families which were broken up by such practices.

- l. **liars** - those who don't hesitate to bend the truth to their own gains or ends.
 - m. **perjurers** - those who lie in legal proceedings, often to the detriment of the reputation of others.
3. **contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.** All of this is to be remedied with sound doctrine. The Greek word (*hugiainein*) literally means, "health-giving" doctrine. And the glorious, God-given good news, even when it is challenging is always health-giving. When Paul says he has been entrusted with it he refers especially to the office of Apostles he has received but also indicates that God has trusted him to confound false teaching with the truth of the Gospel. In other words expects him to act in accord with the word he has received and share it with others to bring health to the world.
- D. Paul recalls his own conversion - ***I thank him who has given me strength for this, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful by appointing me to his service, {13} though I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him; but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, {14} and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. {15} The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinners; {16} but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. {17} To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.***
1. ***I thank Him*** - Paul thanks God for three reasons
 - a. Because Christ chose him - Christ himself reminded his apostles, in John 15:16 *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide;...* Paul is keenly aware of how Christ has appointed him to service. This certainly recalls the story of his conversion wherein Christ literally knocks him down, blinds him binds him to consider a new direction. Few calls have been so clear! Further he must discern his vocation with and through the Church. Thus Paul's experience was not merely subjective, it was discerned with the Church. As we read in Acts: *Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." {11} And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying, {12} and he has seen a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." {13} But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; {14} and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy name." {15} But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a*

chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; Acts 9:10-15 Paul later submits himself to Peter before beginning his mission as we read in Galatians 1: when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, {16} was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, {17} nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. {18} Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. {19} But I saw none of the other apostles except James... Thus Paul is grateful that he has been called to serve and marvels in the fact the fact that God has appointed him.

- b. Paul also thanks God because He trusted him, he judged him faithful. Remember, Paul had been a great persecutor of the Church and to think that God not only forgave him but also entrusted him with a special and critical mission is astounding. We will frequently find ourselves in the position to forgive someone but we are often slow to trust them again, and this may sometimes be a necessary persecution. God however, sees the heart and brings Paul from being a persecutor to being an ambassador. Once again, God shows the depths of his love and mercy here.
 - c. Paul also thanks God because he has empowered him. Jesus Christ never calls a person to any task for which he does not empower him first. This is a critical teaching on grace all too often overlooked today. We presume people are bound to sin or to fail or to fall away from commitments and we say, "After all, I'm only human!" But we forget that God's own power and grace go before us to enable us to do the right thing, to be faithful and to be holy. Paul also renders the glory of his success to God to whom alone belongs the praise and honor and thanksgiving. In the end all is grace (gift) and if we have done anything good, it is really God who has done it through us.
 - d. ***I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief*** - To a certain extent, Paul's Jewish background is evident here. It was a Jewish belief that sins committed in ignorance could be atoned for by sacrifice. However, deliberate sin could not be atoned for. Hence, he underscores his ignorance. Nevertheless, it is obvious that in the fullest Christian sense, even deliberate sins can be forgiven if there is true contrition. This does not mean that Paul has forgotten this fact it is only a sign of his Jewish background coming out. He uses a Jewish manner of speaking.
- E. ***the grace of our Lord overflowed for me*** - as Paul has said else where, where sin abounds, grace a bounds al the more.
 - F. ***I am the foremost of sinners; but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience for an example***

Paul essentially says that his own conversion and the fact that mercy had been shown him, should serve as a heartening example. The example of his own sin becomes a testimony of the great mercy of the Lord. The fact that Paul calls himself the foremost of sinners is used by many to confirm that Paul is in fact the author of this letter. It is doubtful that if someone were writing in Paul's name, such a person would make this attestation. At any rate, Paul remembers his own sin not so much to beat up on himself, but to underscore the memory of God's mercy. This is how it must be with us. Sin is a reality in our lives. And some of us have sinned grievously. We should not dredge up memories of our sin for the sake of embarrassing ourselves or stirring up feelings of guilt. Nevertheless, we must remember the mercies of the Lord, and this obviously implies that we remember our sins. It is in fact the basic rhythm of the Gospel. The Opening words of our Lord's public ministry were: "The kingdom of God is at hand, Repent and believe the Good News." If we are to receive Jesus as our Savior then we must first acknowledge that we need saving, hence the full recognition of our sin. Thus Paul says : *The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*

G. Timothy's responsibilities - *This charge I commit to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophetic utterances which pointed to you, that inspired by them you may wage the good warfare, {19} holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith, {20} among them Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

1. *in accordance with the prophetic utterances which pointed to you-* Evidently Paul is referring here to the utterances of charismatically gifted people who apparently pointed to Timothy as a suitable candidate for the office of Bishop of Ephesus. The prophets of the early Church were charismatic members of local churches who wandered about making predictions. Paul recognized them as possessing an important charism. (1 Cor 12:28-29; 1 Cor 14:29, 32, 37; Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11) In the early Church the office of prophet and teacher seem to have been more formalized as an office. Later they disappear from descriptions of Church ministries and tend to be more associated with Bishops, priests and deacons. For example consider this text from the Didache (C.A. 90-110 AD) and see how the two are still considered separately but are already beginning to merge: *Elect for yourselves, therefore,² bishops and deacons, worthy of the Lord, humble men and not lovers of money, truthful and proven; for they also serve you in the ministry of the prophets and teachers. Do not despise them for they are your honorable men together with the prophets and teachers.³* This all helps give us some understanding of the office of prophet and teacher. Why the office disappeared in the

²The therefore here links this passage with the discussion that went before it and that discussion concerned the mandate to celebrate the Eucharist. Hence, with this context Bishops and deacons are mentioned together with the prophets and teachers. The context of these offices seem to be essential liturgical and thus clerical.

³Didache 15:1.

early Church is not entirely known but one explanation is that it became more and more synonymous with the clerical offices and is simply conflated with them.

2. ***inspired by them you may wage the good warfare*** - since these prophets in effect proclaim God's will, Timothy should be made bold and courageous knowing that the Lord will help him. He should wage war and in effect be a good soldier. This notion of the Christian as a soldier is also developed in the second Letter of Timothy 2:3-4 *Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him* and in Ephesians 6:13-17 *Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. {14} Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, {15} and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; {16} besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. {17} And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* This whole notion of spiritual combat needs to be rediscovered today. In the past, most spiritual writers always had a chapter, and sometimes even a book on the topic pugna spiritalis (Spiritual battle). Today, such topics are rare. We seem to have developed a peevishness about the harder sayings and teachings of our Lord. Thus, Paul's advice to Timothy that he wage warfare may seem alien to many modern ears. Nevertheless, we are in a battle and the task before us is to stand up and fight or be taken prisoner. Life is a spiritual combat between god and evil; a fight that is not just waged outside of us but inside as well. Thus we must have courage and fight avoiding timidity and discouragement. Waging the war is essentially for ourselves and for others: *For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* Ephesians 6:12.
3. ***holding faith and a good conscience*** - when conscience goes astray it means a shipwreck of the faith. There is a reciprocal relation here. Those who live in a bad moral situation are frequently hostile to faith since that faith makes demands upon them which may well call them to change. Likewise, poor doctrine also leads often to poor or confused moral conduct. This recalls our previous discussion of sound doctrine as more literally, "Health-giving" doctrine. We do not have to look far to see the price that is paid when people turn away from the truth and adopt a bad conscience or have a conscience that is poorly formed. You have only to ask how many locks to you have on your doors? How much higher must the body count go before we realize that only the saving truth of Jesus Christ will set us free. Thus correct doctrine helps form a good conscience which in turn leads to a more healthy and orderly society.
4. ***Hymenaeus and Alexander*** - Paul goes so far as to name names.

Hymenaeus is also mentioned in 2 Tim 2:17 as having a false notion that the resurrection of Christians has already taken place. In other words, that they would never die. Alexander is probably the same "Alexander the coppersmith [who] did me great harm mentioned in 2 Tim 2:14. Paul probably condemned both of these men as he left Ephesus.

5. ***whom I have delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme*** - These words may seem strong but they essentially mean that Paul has excommunicated them. In effect he hands them over to Satan so that they may learn that serving Satan is a lot harder than serving Jesus. Thus Paul's action is medicinal hoping that they will come to their senses. He does the same thing in 1 Cor 5 which is worth reviewing here: *It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife. {2} And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. {3} For though absent in body I am present in spirit, and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment {4} in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, {5} you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. {6} Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? {7} Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with immoral men; {10} not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. {11} But rather I wrote to you not to associate with any one who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber -- not even to eat with such a one. {12} For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? {13} God judges those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you."* See how Paul hopes that the individual here will come to his senses, repent, and thus be saved on the day of the Last Judgement. Hence, excommunication from the Church is always conducted as a medical procedure, both to protect the whole body of the Church but also to save the individual, ultimately.

V. Chapter Two - Regulations about prayer

- A. Prayer for those in authority ***First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, {2} for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. {3} This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, {4} who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. {5} For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, {6} who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time. {7} For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. {8} I desire then that in every place the men should***

pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

1. It is an extraordinary thing to see that even in the early days of persecutions from those in authority (both Jewish and Roman authorities) Paul still exhorts that prayers be offered for them. A similar passage can be seen in 1 Peter 2:17: *Fear God, honor the emperor*. Remember the Emperor was the infamous Nero. Paul says we ought to do this for four reasons:

- a. ***that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way*** - For all its short-comings, the Roman Empire did provide what came to be known as the *Pax Romana*. The Romans enforced a certain discipline but they also had a rather tolerant attitude to local custom and religious practice. Further, they kept law and order quite well among the mixed societies of the Mediterranean. Likewise the Romans held more terrifying despots at bay and provided an efficient transportation network in the ancient world. In the midst of this *Pax Romana* it was quite possible to lead a peaceful and godly life so long as one avoided anything that struck up social unrest or civil disorder. Problems arose later in regard to the Romans when they began to demand that Christians (and Jews) offer sacrifice to the pagan Gods. This was a line that could not be crossed. It is also good to recall the teaching of Paul back in Romans 13:1-7 *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. {2} Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. {3} For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, {4} for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer. {5} Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. {6} For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. {7} Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.* Thus Christian teaching holds respect for civil authority in high regard and as a sacred duty, since, for better or worse, those in authority are there because God wills it.
- b. ***and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, {4} who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*** - The second reason to pray for those in authority is that it is pleasing to God. Good citizens are also a good tool for evangelization. The more reasonable and cooperative (where possible) Christians could be, the more reasonable and valuable the

Christian religion would be perceived. Thus attraction and conversion would be the result. This is obviously would please God who wants all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

- c. ***For there is one God*** - If this be the case then the religion of the pagans is false. If we love them then we should pray and work to proclaim the truth of the One, True God to them.
 - d. ***there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*** - again, the only access to the Father is through Jesus. Hence we must pray that all will come to a knowledge and relationship with him. Sometimes Catholics are criticized for appealing to God through Mary and all the saints. If Jesus is the sole mediator then why pray to saints? The key point to remember is that their role is subordinate to that of Jesus. They can only present our petitions to Jesus who intercedes for us with the Father. It would be just like asking you to pray for me. Why not just go directly to Jesus yourself. The answer is because we know that we are called to pray for one another and the prayer of the righteous man availeth much. If it is noble and good that we pray for one another then it also follows that we can ask or friends the saints to pray for us. This does not cancel the sole mediatorship of Jesus any more than does praying for one-another.
2. ***men should pray, lifting holy hands*** - This gesture of prayer in the early Church is still continued today by the priest in Mass. In certain instances, those in the pews sometimes also use this gesture, e.g. during the Our Father. This is fine, however it is improper for lay persons to extend their hands in such a manner during the Eucharistic Prayer since it is the priest alone who prays the priestly prayer on behalf of the people.
 3. ***lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling*** - the holy hands are a symbol of the inner holiness. Peace with one's neighbor is an essential prerequisite of effective prayer. For example recall these passages from the Gospel
 - a. Matthew 5:23-24 So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, {24} leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you;
 - b. Matthew 6:15 but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
 - c. Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."
- B. Women at Prayer - ***also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire {10} but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion. {11} Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. {12} I permit no woman to***

teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. {13} For Adam was formed first, then Eve; {14} and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. {15} Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

1. This passage is written from a Jewish background. No nation ever gave women a bigger place in the home and family than the Jews. But officially the position of women was very low. In Jewish law she was not possessed of personal rights but was a possession of her husband or father. She was forbidden to learn law and had no part in the synagogue service. Men and women sat in different places in the synagogue as well. Men came to the synagogue to learn the Law but it was said that the woman's purpose there was to hear the law. Only men could proclaim the scriptures and a woman was absolutely forbidden to teach in a school, even in the earliest grades. She was also exempt from many of the ritual prescriptions of the Law. A strict Rabbi would never greet a woman on the street, even his own wife or kindred. A quick summary of the role of women would be that she bear children, send them to synagogue, attend to domestic concerns and leave her husband free to study in the schools. She had substantial authority in the running of the home but largely at the behest of her husband. In the Greek world too, women led a sheltered life. She lived in her own quarters into which no one but her husband came. She did not even appear at meals and was never to walk the streets alone. She was never to go to public assembly either.
2. ***also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire*** - Greek women especially adorned themselves richly and would often spend huge amounts in such matters. Paul obviously advises against such extravagance and encouraged a more simple elegance. Modesty is a key point he makes. Modesty is reverence for mystery. Hence, when a woman dresses mostly she seeks not to make known the more personal aspects of her body. Hence, clothing which calls attention to her body in a provocative manner would violate the standards of modesty. Such standards vary from time to place. In our own age, tight clothing, short skirts or other revealing clothing offends against modesty. Obviously men need to observe modesty norms as well but the matter for them is usually a little less complex.
3. ***but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion.*** - the true adornment that should be sought are good deeds and the beauty of holiness.
4. ***Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent.*** - Paul speaks with special reference to religious assembly. Many today simply dismiss these remarks as a relic from a previous era which ought to be simply ignored today. The only problem with this "solution" is that St. Paul appeals to a theological reason for the discipline. Likewise, what we read here is not the opinion of Paul but the word of God. He states that the

reason for this norm is that *Adam was formed first, then Eve; {14} and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor*. Three solutions present themselves here

- a. One solution is simply to insist that this is a cultural situation that Paul has described and it can be safely ignored today.
- b. Another solution is to say that all the regulations in this chapter are mere temporary regulations to meet a given situation in Timothy's church at Ephesus.
- c. Paul is speaking specifically of the Liturgical assembly and even more specifically of the preaching task. If this be the case, the norm is still followed in Catholic worship. Although we permit women to act as lectors, we permit only priests and deacons to give the homily. Likewise, although it is less true today with the increasing role of the laity, Men largely exercise final authority in most parishes through their role of Pastor and Bishop.
- d. Paul means exactly what he says and we should observe it today. It is a same that most men have abdicated their responsibility in this area. This conclusion is the premise of the many "men's ministries" in the evangelical Bible Christians. Women should encourage the men in their life to root themselves in the word of God and then fulfill their role as the primary teachers and examples to their wife and children.

5. Was Paul simply what we would call today a "sexist?"

- a. One immediate problem with asking this question is that the focus is on Paul and his culture, biases, and personal views. But this is a biblical text that we rightly call the "Word of God." Hence if we dismiss Paul, we also dismiss the word of God which is to be proclaimed in season and out of season and which remains true forever. Nevertheless, let us examine the question of Paul's possible sexism. Those who still insist on this view underscore the fact that Paul says "I permit" and hence is merely expressing his own opinion or advice.
- b. Overall Paul seems to have had a good relationship with women and often praises their work. There were women prophets (1 Cor 11:1-13) and deaconesses (Rom 16:1). Priscilla with her husband Aquila was a valued teacher in the early Church (Acts 18:26). Euodia and Syntyche were women praised by Paul for laboring in the gospel (Phil 4:2-3). Philip the evangelist had four daughters who were prophetesses (Acts 21:9). The aged women were to teach (Titus 2:3). Paul held Lois and Eunice in high honor (2 Tim 1:5). And there is many a woman's name held in honor in Romans 16.
- c. When we read this passage then, we must keep the previous information in mind. Paul acknowledged and appreciated women's roles in the wider Church even though he says here that Men should ultimately lead and teach in the church.

6. Here then is a proposed solution to the dilemma of this passage. The dictate of silence and submission has special reference to the liturgical assembly and the hierarchal structure of the Church. The word "hierarchy" comes from a Greek word which means (literally) "The rule of priests." Hence men (bishops, priests and deacons) may alone give the instruction (homily) in the liturgical assembly and men alone staff the hierarchy. But women do have their roles as teachers and proclaimers of the Gospel values in the wider society. This would especially be the case with their children and so Paul says, ***Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.***
7. This solution is not bound to please all but it does attempt to take into account the wider appreciation of Paul in regard to the role of women and his specific instructions given here. Rather than dismiss one text or the other, this solution attempts to take both into account.

III. Chapter Three

A. Qualifications for a Bishop - *The saying is sure: If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task. {2} Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, {3} no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money. {4} He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; {5} for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church? {6} He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil; {7} moreover he must be well thought of by moreover he must be thought well of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

1. *The office of Bishop* - The bishop (in Greek episcopus = overseer) was a priest who was in charge of some particular community. As a minister of the Church his role was one of teaching (v. 2), and governance (v. 5). His task was a demanding one and called for self-sacrifice and a life that was above reproach. In the earliest days the office of Bishop and Priest seem to have been almost synonymous. However, very soon, the priest came to take on more the more of deputy of the bishop. He could do many of the things that the bishop could do but not all (just as today). Thus every bishop is a priest but not every priest a bishop. The sacrament of Holy Orders, as we call it today is seen on three tiers: Bishop, priest and deacon. These offices were recognized as essential in the early Church and we should resist any notions that these offices are later "inventions" of the later Church. For example, consider this reflection by St. Ignatius of Antioch as he wrote to the Church at Tralles in about 98-100 AD: *...when you are obedient to the Bishop as you would be to Jesus Christ, you are living, not in a human way, but according to Jesus Christ...You must continue, then, to do nothing apart from the bishop. Be obedient to, to the priests as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ, our Hope...in the same way all should respect the deacons as they would Jesus Christ, just as they respect the bishop as representing the Father and the priests as the council of God and the College of Apostles. Apart from these there is nothing that can be called a Church.*⁴ Thus, although the exact role of bishops priests and deacons in the early Church would still undergo some development and refinement, it is clear that the offices are present in their seminal form and considered an essential component of the Church.
2. *the husband of one wife*, - Paul obviously does not refer to polygamy here since that is forbidden to everyone. Nor does he seem to mean that a bishop is required to be married. But recall that the culture of the time was a lot like now. Both Jews and Gentiles dabbled in a great degree of divorce and remarriage. This was addressed by our Lord who denounced the practice and forbade it. (cf. Matt 5 and Matt 19). Nevertheless, many converts to Christianity were a part of this culture of divorce. But even in

⁴Ep. ad Trall. 2 & 3.

the culture of divorce and remarriage everyone, then as now, recognized the ideal was that a person have been married only once. Paul thus taps into this preference and declares that a man who was called to be a bishop must have been married only once (implicitly even if his previous marriage practices took place before his conversion to Christianity). Thus he could be shown as a man who was stable insofar as the natural virtues are concerned.

3. In the early church celibacy was not a requirement for those who presided over the early Church communities. However, it very soon became customary to require celibacy. The writings of the Fathers of the Church and other ecclesiastical writers testify to the spread of voluntary celibacy as an ideal for sacred ministers since it was a profound sign of their total dedication to their ministry. Paul mentions this as an ideal in 1 Cor 7: *Now concerning the matters about which you wrote. It is well for a man not to touch a woman. {2} But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. {3} The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. {4} For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does. {5} Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control. {6} I say this by way of concession, not of command. {7} I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. {8} To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. {9} But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.* The Church in the west from the beginning of the fourth, strengthened, spread and approved this practice by means of provincial councils and through the Popes. From the 4th century on there was a general requirement that priest of the Western (Latin) rite be celibate. The requirement was not always uniformly enforced but it grew to become so and became an absolute requirement by the time of the Council of Trent in the 16th century. The eastern rite Churches however have always allowed their priests to be married.
4. ***He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; {5} for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church? -*** The phrase speaks for itself. As our Lord has said in Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.
5. ***He must not be a recent convert*** - One of the functions of the Bishop was to preside over the community. This requires the wisdom that comes with years. And the wisdom required is not necessarily that which comes from one's chronological age. A new convert is called a "neophyte" which literally means new-born. In most cases it takes some time for the faith to

mature especially for those who wish to lead. But the danger that Paul is especially seeking to avoid is pride for he goes on to state the reason a new convert should not be named a bishop: *or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil*. The devil sought to be God's equal by refusing to serve him, hence by the sin of pride the Devil fell like lightning from the heavens.

6. *he must be well thought of by moreover he must be thought well of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil* - Another function of the bishop was to represent the Church to non-believers. Surely this is the responsibility of every Christian (cf Mat 5:16⁵; Col 4:5⁶; 1 Pet 2:13⁷; 3:1⁸) but those who hold office have a special obligation in this regard since they represent the whole community. Nothing hurts the Church the Church more than members whose public life belies the faith they proclaim to have. The last phrase is puzzling here: "the snare of the devil" The Greek word *diabolos* translated here as devil can also be translated slanderer. Hence the phrase would read: "fall into the snare of slanderers" which makes a lot more sense in this context

B. Qualifications of Deacons *Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; {9} they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. {10} And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. {11} The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. {12} Let deacons be the husband of one wife, and let them manage their children and their households well; {13} for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

1. *Deacons* - In the early Church, deacons had charge of charitable ministrations and assisted in the liturgical and administrative direction of the community. We first see them in action in Acts 6:1-7 *Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. {2} And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. {3} Therefore, brethren, pick out from among*

5Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

6Colossians 4:5-6 Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer every one.

71 Peter 2:13-17 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

81 Peter 3:1-2 Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, when they see your reverent and chaste behavior.

you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. {4} But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." {5} And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. {6} These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. {7} And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem

2. ***not greedy for gain*** - deacons might be particularly subject to this temptation as they had a charge in the distribution of the alms. Recall too how Judas fell prey to this temptation: *But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said, {5} "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" {6} This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. John 12:4-6*
3. ***they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience*** - Obviously they must adhere to the same sound doctrine to which Paul has repeatedly referred here. He calls it here the mystery of faith. The word mystery in a biblical sense refers to the plan of God, once hidden but now revealed in the present age that all nations are called salvation through Christ Jesus. It is best described in a lengthy passage from the letter to the Ephesians 1 *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. {3} Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, {4} even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. {5} He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, {6} to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. {7} In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace {8} which he lavished upon us. {9} For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight **the mystery** of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ {10} as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. {11} In him, according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, {12} we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory. {13} In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, {14} which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. {15} For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, {16} I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, {17} that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, {18} having*

the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, {19} and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might {20} which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, {21} far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; {22} and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, {23} which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Hence deacons must be men who clearly adhere to the mystery of this faith in all its fullness.

4. ***And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons.*** The office of deacon as well as the office of priest and bishop are vocations. That is to say, a man is called to such an office only after the Church has discerned he is worthy and able. For priests there is usually a period of 5 to 10 years in the seminary wherein he considers his own call and the Church, through the seminary faculty and diocesan officials do the same. Is he a man of faith and prayer. Is he of acceptable intelligence? Can he articulate the faith well. Is his character good? Is able to lead? Does he have concern for people and is he able to relate to them well? Is he accepting of authority and does he hold to sound doctrine. These and other criteria are used to judge a man's worthiness for priesthood. Only when the bishop has had such assurances given to him of the man's qualities should he ordain (i.e. call that man to orders). The same is true for permanent deacons. They typically study three years in an evening program and must demonstrate similar good character. Thus, holy orders are not a right of any individual. He may simply request consideration for such an office. It is ultimately the bishop who must decide to confer the office or not.
5. ***The women likewise*** - There is no way to decide if this refers to the wives of deacons or to an office of "deaconess." The Greek word *gynaikas* can be translated either as women or wives. There is little historical evidence that there was a formal office of deaconess in the early Church as we understand the office of deacon today. If the word deaconess is encountered it can mean: the wife of a deacon or women who had some special charge in dealing with women where it would be inappropriate for men to do so. For example, they may well have carried out baptisms for women since baptisms were conducted without clothing. In either case, there is no evidence that they received a formal office by the laying on of hands.
 - a. Some would use a scriptural reference such as this to indicate that women can be ordained as deacons. The reference here is ambiguous however. Many of the following questions are raised:
 - (1) What was the theological understanding of deacons at the time Paul writes? Did he, and the early Church have the

same understanding that surely developed later? Remember that, although the role of deacon, priest, and bishop are clearly rooted in scripture, this does not mean that the doctrines surrounding these levels of holy orders were fully developed or thought out at this time.

- (2) Did the early Church conceive of the diaconate as a part of holy orders?
 - (3) What was the role of the deacon. Was there a different role for deacons and deaconesses?
 - (4) Was the title deaconess simply the title for the wife of a deacon but merely title, not an actual functioning ministry in the Church?
 - (5) These questions and many more make the whole question of woman deaconesses questionable at best. There is no evidence that they ever received a ministry by the laying on of hands (the outward sign of the sacrament of Holy Orders). We are certain that some women in the first 300 years of the Church had the title "deaconess" but we do not know exactly what they did. As was said, a likely role was the baptism of women. For the sake of modesty women usually baptized women. The most recent and most thorough study of this question of deaconesses is 500+ pages in length and concludes against the ordination of women as deacons. The author of that work goes to great lengths to show that although some women had the title of deaconess, their role was quite distinct from that of deacons.
6. The rest of the comments on deacons and their qualities mirror what was already said about bishops
 7. We might have expected Paul to mention priests. But recall as was said above, the distinction between bishops and priests was not always made in these earliest documents, (although priests (presbyteroi) are mentioned distinctly 50 times in the New Testament) sometimes the term bishop and priest were interchangeable. However, we can see (per Ignatius' Letter above) that within fifty years the distinction was clearer.
- C. The Church is the pillar and bulwark of truth - ***I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, {15} if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth. {16} Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory***
1. ***I hope to come to you soon, but...if I am delayed*** - Paul often mentions his travel plans but recall that travel in the ancient world always involved guesswork!
 2. ***I am writing these instructions to you so that, {15} if I am delayed, you***

may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, - if he is delayed Paul wants this letter to serve as a kind of Constitution on the Church. Paul not only sets forth behavior but he also gives a fourfold description of the Church:

- a. ***the household of God*** - here is emphasized the family character of the Church. This hearkens back to Paul's writing in Ephesians you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God... (Eph 2:19). Not only do we have the image of the family of God, but also the image of a house itself made up of believers who are the living stones (1 Pet 2:5), its foundations are the Apostles (1 Cor 3:11), Christ himself is the cornerstone (Matt 21:42), those who hold office are stewards who should rule not as overlords but with service and the same dedication as a father does in his own household (1 Tim 3:4-5).
 - b. ***the church of the living God*** - Jesus Christ himself indwells the Church and is the head of the Body, the Church (Col 1:18) . We individually are his members, and hence the Church comprises the mystical Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:28). Hence we are no mere building, or collection of human beings only. We are gathered together with the living God. The Church is Holy because of the presence of Christ.
 - c. ***the pillar and bulwark of the truth*** - these images convey the Church's strength, permanence and protective qualities. Pillars hold the whole structure up and must be strong and immovable. Bulwarks are strong, wall-like structures use to defend the building(s) within. Hence the Church is to provide protection from the forces of falsehood, evil and Satan by providing a secure environment in which the truth may be proclaimed, lived, and preserved free of corruption.
3. ***the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth*** - What is interesting here is that the Church is called the pillar of truth. Many Bible Christians when asked, "What do you think is the pillar of truth?" would respond, "The Bible, of course." And yet here the Bible itself assigns that exalted position to the Church. This is the Catholic position. The Bible is clearly essential and central to Catholics but the Church pre-existed the Bible (at least the New Testament) as we know it. We have a Bible because the Church, prompted by the Holy Spirit, collected the writings that He had inspired and presented them to us. We know that they are the word of God because the Church tells us so. The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians is the Word of God, but the First Letter of Clement to the Corinthians is not. Why and how do we know? Because the Church, through the Councils, and popes tells us so. (e.g. The Council of Laodicea, in 348 AD⁹, The Decree of Pope Damascus in 382 AD¹⁰ Clearly we must have faith that Holy Spirit guides the Church in this task. But note that it

⁹Jurgens 745s + t.

¹⁰Jurgens 910t

is the Church who is, and has been the guardian of the truth entrusted to her by Jesus through the Apostles. Before there was a Bible there was a Church and once there was the Bible there was still the Church to interpret and proclaim these scriptures. The Church can never over-rule or change scripture for God, who gave the scriptures through her cannot deny himself or change his own proclamation of the Church. Hence, just as the Scriptures are preserved free of error by God himself, so too he must preserve the Church from error whenever she formally teaches or interprets scripture.

4. ***the mystery*** - see above.
5. ***He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory*** - the order of ideas in this proclamation of faith is similar to most of the other Christological Hymns of the New Testament (cf Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:3) and probably reflects a good summary of the oral preaching and prayer of the earliest preaching of the Apostles: The Word, who existed from all eternity took flesh, preached a message of salvation for all the world, suffered, died, rose and now reigns in glory. Each of the three parts of this short credal-hymn expresses a paradox of the mystery by using phrases involving contrasts (Semites were very fond of this device).
 - a. ***Manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit*** - Flesh here means human nature but it takes the Holy Spirit to call him Lord (1 Cor 12:3). To say he was vindicated (Justified) does not mean he had sins to be expiated. In the Bible, God's justice is His fidelity to his promises. Hence, God promised to save us and did so (in his fidelity (justice) to his promise) through Jesus Christ. We must access this truth through the Spirit which draws us to faith.
 - b. ***seen by angels, preached among the nations*** - he angels have direct sight of Him always but we must come to know him through preaching for we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7).
 - c. ***believed in the world, taken up in glory*** - The last words profess how Christ is glorified: on earth through faith in Him Phil 2:11; John 11:4, 40), in heaven, by his ascension to the right Hand of the Father where He is seated in glory.

IV. Chapter four

- A. False Teachers - ***Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, {2} through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared, {3} who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. {4} For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; {5} for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. {6} If you put these instructions before the brethren, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which you have followed. {7} Have nothing to do with godless and silly myths.***

Train yourself in godliness; {8} for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. {9} The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. {10} For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. {11} Command and teach these things.

1. *Now the Spirit expressly says* - The Spirit here is the Holy Spirit. Paul likely refers to the revelation of some prophet in the early Church who in some way predicted a defection from the faith by some who previously had embraced it.
2. *later times* - may well refer to the end times, i.e. the final days of the world. Although the emphasis was on the future, the roots of the defection are clearly related to errors with which Timothy is presently dealing. One thing of which to be aware is the tendency among many today to think that whenever the scriptures refer to the "end times" it refers only to those times. Take for example the fundamentalist use of the Book of Revelation as a "tour guide" to the last days. It clearly describes what shall unfold in those days but it does much more besides. In effect it shows patterns and events which have unfolded and repeated throughout the whole of human history. To a large extent the prophecies of the Book of Revelation were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans in 70 AD. However, this does not mean it cannot speak to future ages. The destruction of the Temple serves as a paradigm (example) for the final destruction of the world. Thus Revelation speaks to the past, present and future. Here when Paul speaks of defections and heretics, we know that this has always been happening, since Judas, in fact. It will continue down through the ages, just as it has, and will continue in the future. Perhaps in the future such ruptures will be multiplied, but that is not necessarily implied here.
3. *deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons* - False teachers and doctrines were a real problem in the early Church just as they are today. The apostles were always very strong in condemning false teaching and teachers. The early church leaders show an instinct for the fact that faith is far more than touchy-feely emotional state. It has content that must be believed and it is a way of thinking and seeing. Hence false teaching introduces blindness that causes falls. False teaching is a form of mental illness that causes errors in judgement and sorrow. Thus the early teachers and apostles were clear to denounce it and railed against it. They also saw it as a sign of the end-times but we must remember what was said just above: we are in the end-times because it is the final age. Christ has come for the first time. There remains but one more significant event: the second coming of Christ. Until such time we are in what may be termed the "last days." Here are just a few samples of the sobering and searing condemnation of error and heresy in the early Church
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 *Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the*

man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, {4} who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. {5} Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this? {6} And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. {7} For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. {8} And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming. {9} The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, {10} and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. {11} Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, {12} so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

- b. *2 Timothy 3:1-9 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. {2} For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, {3} inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, {4} treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, {5} holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. Avoid such people. {6} For among them are those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, {7} who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth. {8} As Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of corrupt mind and counterfeit faith; {9} but they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.*
- c. *2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, {4} and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.*
- d. *1 Corinthians 10:10-12 nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. {11} Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come. {12} Therefore let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.*
- e. *Acts 20:29-30 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; {30} and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.*

- f. 1 John 2:18 *Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, so now many Antichrist have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour.*
 - g. 1 John 4:1-3 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. {2} By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, {3} and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of Antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already.*
 - h. Matthew 24:10-12 *And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. {11} And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. {12} And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold.*
4. **liars whose consciences are seared** - The false teachers do not have the excuse of a clear conscience. They lie and they know they do with the intent of leading others astray. These are bold words for Paul to make. We often hesitate from presuming the intention of another person's motives. But here we must remember Paul's insights are guided by the Holy Spirit who probes the mind and heart and lays bare the intentions of sinners.
 5. **forbid marriage** - recall what we said earlier. We seem to be dealing here with some early form of Gnosticism. Since they believed matter to be evil, it was wrong to pro-create since this increased matter in the world and imprisoned spirit in matter.
 6. **enjoin abstinence from foods** - all food is good because it belongs to God's creation but the heretics, because they rejected material creation as evil had a whole list of foods to avoid. Some food had to be taken to survive, but much was to be rejected. Many non-Catholics have used this verse to reject the Catholic practice of abstaining from meat during Fridays of Lent. But it must be clear that we do this for a very different reason. Not because meat is bad or evil, but because it is good. We are asked to forego a good aspect of God's creation as a sacrifice, not because it is considered as loathsome. Paul has dealt with this topic in other areas as well:
 - a. 1 Corinthians 8:1-10 (RSV) *Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." "Knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up. {2} If any one imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. {3} But if one loves God, one is known by him. {4} Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one." {5} For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth -- as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords" -- {6} yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. {7} However, not all possess this*

knowledge. But some, through being hitherto accustomed to idols, eat food as really offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. {8} Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. {9} Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. {10} For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols?

b. 1 Corinthians 10:23-33 "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. {24} Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. {25} Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. {26} For "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." {27} If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. {28} (But if some one says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then out of consideration for the man who informed you, and for conscience' sake -- {29} I mean his conscience, not yours -- do not eat it.) For why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples? {30} If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? {31} So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. {32} Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, {33} just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

c. Matthew 15:11 not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

d. cf also Romans 14

7. ***For everything created by God is good*** - This reflects the a phrase used repeatedly in the first Chapter of Genesis: "God saw that it was good."
8. ***foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*** - This is our proper response to all of God's gift. And notice too it is a thanksgiving informed by the doctrine of faith: namely that God created everything and everything He created is thereby good. We may frequently misuse his creation, but that does not rob it of its goodness.
9. ***thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.*** True prayer emerges from the Holy Spirit who is within. Hence, when one blesses the food to be received by a prayer of thanksgiving it becomes blessed in fact by the word of God. When God speaks, things happen. eg. Let there be light, and there was light.
10. ***If you put these instructions before the brethren, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which you have followed.*** - The good priest, the good

preacher, teaches sound doctrine. Sound doctrine is not always the most pleasant thing for people to hear. But the good priest, like the good doctor will point out the good as well as the diseased. He will also prescribe cures, some of which are very painful, others more benign. Priests should be encouraged by their people when they preach sound doctrine. There has to be more to a good sermon than delivery, there must be sound doctrine, good teaching. Entertainment value must be secondary to correct content.

11. ***Train yourself in godliness;*** - there is the constant need to learn new insights into God's law and requirements. There are new implications to the meaning of faith and its demands. These must be learned through study, practice and reflection. It is a task for us all but especially for church leaders.
12. ***bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way,*** Paul has in numerous places compared the Christian life to that of an athlete who trains and disciplines his body for a crown that withers and fades. If athletes will do these things for passing rewards, how much more must we who strive for an imperishable crown. Godliness will profit us not only here (for it orders our life rightly), but also in the life to come (for through it we merit by God's grace and eternal reward).
13. ***to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. {11} Command and teach these things.***- We must know the goal to which we are tending, otherwise, we loose our way! We must be a people of hope for there are suffering to endure in this life. Likewise, if we do not yearn for the goal and the hope to which we are called, we will not strive very hard in the moral life to please God. Hence, we must know, and Timothy must preach the glory and hope to which we are called so that all will be willing to toil and labor. Timothy must command and teach in this vain. We keep the commands as a people of Hope inflamed by love, not merely as an arduous duty.

B. Pastoral advice to Timothy - ***Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. {13} Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. {14} Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. {15} Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. {16} Take heed to yourself and to your teaching; hold to that, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.*** -

1. ***Let no one despise your youth-*** Timothy had joined in Paul's work about eighteen years previously and although we are not given his exact age at the time of joining Paul (cf Acts 16:1-3) the implication is that he was in his mid-teens. This would probably make him about 35 years of age at the time of the writing of this letter. Even in the earlier days of shorter life spans overall, this would have been quite a young age for such a high leadership role as that of bishop, overseer, of a whole community. The advice Paul gives here is not so much that Timothy should permit, or that

he should rebuke, anyone who questions his age, but that he should not let it bother him. The advice that follows also shows him how he should compensate for his lack of chronological years. Lastly, it will be noted that chronological age alone is not always a guarantee of wisdom and grace or even of the ability to lead. Though age and experience are almost always a great help, there are exceptions to the general rule and we know it. We are all aware of young individuals who, for various reasons possess outstanding skills to lead and discern. Likewise there are also examples of older individuals who, for various reasons possess none of these qualities.

2. ***but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity*** - Timothy, since he is young, must make it his special care to demonstrate the qualities listed here. It may be objected that all of us should do what is required here. But Timothy, due to his age and leadership role has a special obligation in these regards.
 - a. ***in speech and in conduct*** - clearly a young man, even when he is in leadership positions, must always address his elders with respect. Even if he must correct, or direct them, it must be done in a tone of voice that is respectful and deferent. Further, Timothy must, by his speech and conduct show himself to be wise beyond his years. Paul obviously thinks Timothy is wise beyond his years for the very fact that he had hands laid upon (v 14). Thus grace makes him wise and empowered to lead. He must yield to the Spirit given him and thus show forth what is in fact the case. There is an old Latin saying: *actio sequitur esse*: "action follows being." That is, what a person or thing does reflects who or what it is. Since Timothy is supernaturally endowed by God's grace, he is to act gracefully in speech and conduct.
 - b. ***in love*** - If Timothy does not act from the motive of divine love the whole thing is pointless. As St. Paul says elsewhere: *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing* 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.
 - c. ***in faith*** - remember that all along Paul has been exhorting Timothy to preach sound doctrine. Hence He must preach in faith the faith. But the other sense of faith is trust. Hence, Timothy must acknowledge that God did not take him this far to leave alone. Hence when he exercises his leadership he is to do so in courage, confidence and trust.
 - d. ***in purity*** - Timothy must have pure motives. He must seek the will of God, and to serve God only. If his motives become self centered or if he seeks merely the approval of human beings, his motives are not pure. To God and God alone, be the glory. To see his glory and grace abound must be Timothy's only motive.

3. ***Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you.*** - Evidently the mission of Timothy to lead the Church at Ephesus was discerned through the ministry of prophets in the early Church. We have already discussed how this seems to have been an important office in the early Church that was later subsumed into the office of Bishop. The laying on of hands was an ancient gesture that expressed solidarity with the one who imposed hands and the recipient; it implied the transfer of a benefit of the transfer of a quality or a function from one person to another. We call the laying on of hands today, ordination. The essential sign of the ordination of the priest is the laying on of hands by the bishop and the words of the prayer that are said in connection with that action. This action links the priest to the bishop in terms of the priestly office and confers priestly power. The root meaning of the word ordain means "to choose" and we see that Timothy was chosen, he did not choose himself. Paul's wording also indicates that the gift that Timothy received at ordination remains in him as a permanent state or power upon which he can and must draw.
4. ***Elders*** - the Greek word is *presbyteroi* from which we get the word priest in English. Literally it means elder however. As said above, the distinction between bishops and priests in the early Church was not always clearly spelled out. It is interesting to compare this text to 2 Tim 1:6 where Paul speaks of the "spiritual gift which is in you through the imposition of my hands." The two texts are not in opposition. It was Paul who ordained Timothy to his sacred office, his rite alone was essential. The difference between the two prepositions (when and through) is significant. In 2 Tim 1:6 the Greek preposition *dia* (through) denotes causality. In this present verse speaks of when the elders laid hands. The Greek preposition *meta*, "with" denotes merely accompaniment. Thus, Timothy's ordination was accomplished through the laying on of Paul's hands and the rite or ordination was accompanied by the action of the priests. This is still the case today in the ordination of a priest today. The Bishop lays hands on the man to be ordained, this is the essential rite and it is the bishop who ordains. However, after the bishop lays his hands, the other priests present then come forward and also lay hands on the man to be ordained. This does not mean that they ordain the man a priest. Rather it is an expression of solidarity and brotherhood with the man who is being ordained.
5. ***Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress-*** The duties referred to here are all the duties to which Paul has previously referred: refuting error, teaching sound doctrine, leading and bringing people into contact with the living God. Timothy himself must progress in holiness. The priest or bishop is a not a finished product, perfected in every virtue and holiness. He too must grow and it is good for his people to see his growth. He should never present himself as perfect or complete. He too needs the Lord and His mercy. Every priest should frequent confession and, though he need not bear all his hidden faults, he

should not be afraid to publicly acknowledge his own need for God's continuing grace.

6. ***Take heed to yourself and to your teaching; hold to that, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers*** - We must remember that these are not just intellectual theories or interesting teachings that Timothy teaches. These are teachings essential for salvation. This is at the heart of the missionary zeal. People need the Lord. He and His truth alone can save them both from present evil and from the judgement to come.

V. Chapter 5

- A. Respectfulness for the faithful - ***Do not rebuke an older man but exhort him as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, {2} older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.***
1. What Paul gives here is really advice that should apply in any family or gathering of human beings in general. It is really quite ordinary in its advertisements but it is often the obvious which gets overlooked.
 2. ***Do not rebuke an older man but exhort him as you would a father*** - To rebuke is to scold, to exhort is to ask some one to hear you out. Clearly, since Timothy is younger he must exercise care in the question of the fraternal correction, teaching and advising of older men. Timothy will find himself in situations where he must correct or reprove older men. Charity demands some fraternal correction from time to time. It is the manner in which this correction is delivered that can be decisive. As a general rule, it is a good idea to try and appeal to the wisdom already in an older man and to reason with him from that. Rebukes such as we might give a child are clearly out of place and will not only make the conversion of the man less likely but also turn the community against Timothy. Sadly today, respect for elders has diminished. This is especially true in school settings where it is greatly needed.
 3. ***treat younger men like brothers*** - Here too the image for necessary corrections is a family one. The image of family makes sense for it will be noticed that sometimes we correct strangers in the most offensive of manners! An example, when some one is not paying attention in traffic it is often see that they are corrected (and they do need correcting) by harsh gestures, ugly looks and harsh words. However, in the family setting we correct those with whom we must live. These people know our own faults and will not just disappear into the crowd. Thus pastors should correct the younger men of their congregation not in harsh military or commanding tones but as though he were a brother, which through faith he is. Paul speaks here of younger men however. Children may have to have stern corrections at times and parents cannot afford to be *excessively* gentle.
 4. ***older women like mothers*** - here too he must never correct older women in a condescending manner. He must respect them as he would his mother. As a leader he may have to issue corrections or clarifications. But always respectfully, exhorting rather than reprimanding. Here too respect for elders is sadly lacking. It is astonishing today to say how many young people (especially young men) no longer defer to older women when relinquishing a seat on the bus, subway or in some line. Further, the school setting's lack of respect is also a sad sign for the lack of respect many young have for teachers, most of whom are women.
 5. ***younger women like sisters, in all purity.*** - In this matter great prudence is necessary for Timothy and all men. Young women should be treated with special refinement and gravity. Spiritual love for women, unless it is chaste quickly degenerates into carnal affection. Thus, the virtue of

chastity is essential here. Again, it is sad to note that many young men act toward young women as sexual predators. What Paul reminds Timothy is good advice for all men. In effect he says, "Treat younger women with the same respect and purity you would expect of someone else in his dealings with your sister. Many men would not tolerate another man to treat their sister as they treat many women in their own life.

- B. Widows, their role and life style - ***Honor widows who are real widows. {4} If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. {5} She who is a real widow, and is left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; {6} whereas she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. {7} Command this, so that they may be without reproach. {8} If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. {9} Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband; {10} and she must be well attested for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, relieved the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. {11} But refuse to enrol younger widows; for when they grow wanton against Christ they desire to marry, {12} and so they incur condemnation for having violated their first pledge. {13} Besides that, they learn to be idlers, gadding about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. {14} So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, rule their households, and give the enemy no occasion to revile us. {15} For some have already strayed after Satan. {16} If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her assist them; let the church not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are real widows.***

1. A little background on widows may prove helpful here. In most ancient societies, the independent woman did not exist. She was a member of a family and was dependant either upon her father or her husband. The position of a widow could therefore be difficult. She wore clothing to designate her position (cf Gen 38:14, 19)¹¹ She could not inherit from her husband since that all went to the eldest son. If she was childless, she usually returned to her father's home (Gen 38:11; Lv 2:13)¹². She could marry again. The upshot of it all was that a woman without a man to defend her rights was an easy victim for oppression. The widow had no defender at law either and therefore had no recourse when a judge was dishonest (Is

¹¹Genesis 38:14,19 she put off her widow's garments, and put on a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage...Then she arose and went away, and taking off her veil she put on the garments of her widowhood.

¹²Genesis 38:11 Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up" -- for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house. Leviticus 22:13 But if a priest's daughter is a widow or divorced, and has no child, and returns to her father's house, as in her youth, she may eat of her father's food; yet no outsider shall eat of it.

1:23; 10:2; 2 Sam 14:4ff; Lk 18:3)¹³. Widows were to be granted a share of the sacrificial festivals (Dt 16:11,14)¹⁴ and the tithes (Dt 14:28ff; Dt 26:12)¹⁵ and were permitted to glean the fields after the harvest (Dt 24:19-21)¹⁶ and the owner was not reap so thoroughly that he left nothing for them. Israelite law did extend protection to widows by prohibiting injustice against them (Ex 22:22; Dt 24:17)¹⁷ and even included curses upon those who practiced such injustices. However, the law was so general and unenforced that it was of little practical use in most particular cases. This is shown by the fact the prophets had to include the

13Isaiah 1:23 Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Every one loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not defend the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them.

Isaiah 10:2 to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!

Luke 18:2-5 He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Vindicate me against my adversary.' For a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.'"

14Deuteronomy 16:10-11,14 Then you shall keep the feast of weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, the Levite who is within your towns, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place which the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there. ... you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns.

15Deuteronomy 14:28-29 "At the end of every three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce in the same year, and lay it up within your towns; and the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

Deuteronomy 26:12 "When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, which is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within your towns and be filled,

16Deuteronomy 24:19-21 "When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. {20} When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. {21} When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

17Exodus 22:22-23 You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you do afflict them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry;

Deuteronomy 24:17-18 "You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge; but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.

oppression of widows in the crimes with which they charge the Israelites (Is 1:17; Jer 7:6; Zech 7:10)¹⁸. Jesus himself spoke of those who "devoured the houses of widows (Mk 12:40; Lk 20:47)¹⁹. The early church made the case of widows a practical concern. It provided food for them (Acts 6:1)²⁰ and Dorcas is praised because she made clothes for them (Acts 9:39)²¹. Care of widows and orphans is one of the two elements of genuine religion mentioned in James 1:27²² It is also clear that, from the text we have in front of us here that the care of widows is rather well organized and thought out. The basic structure is this:

- a. there was an approved list of widows who could receive assistance
 - b. They had to be sixty years old or more and childless
 - c. If they had relatives, the duty fell to them rather than the wider church.
 - d. She must have and maintain a good reputation
 - e. She must live a good life and be entirely devote to prayer and good works.
2. The care of widows is primarily a duty of the family - *{4} If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God...{8} If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever...{16} If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her assist them; let the church not be*

18Isaiah 1:17 learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Jeremiah 7:6-7 if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers for ever.

Zechariah 7:10 do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart."

19Mark 12:38-40 And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to go about in long robes, and to have salutations in the market places and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

Luke 20:46-47 "Beware of the scribes, who like to go about in long robes, and love salutations in the market places and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

20Acts 6:1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

21Acts 9:39 So Peter rose and went with them. And when he had come, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing tunics and other garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.

22James 1:27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

burdened, so that it may assist those who are real widows. -

- a. What I have done here is to stitch together the common threads of Paul's thoughts on the duty of the family. As can be seen he keeps returning to this theme in a rather back and forth fashion. He raises the issue in verses 4, 8 and 16. I have simply stitched them together here so that we can consider the theme at one glance.
- b. There is an old saying of which we are all familiar, "Charity begins at home." Certainly it does not end there but it must begin there. One's primary obligations are to one's family members. If a man gives his money away to the poor but neglects to feed his own children, he has erred seriously against the proper order of charity. Paul goes so far to say that such a person has denied the faith.
- c. One of the chief contributing factors to the rise in poverty has been the breakdown of the family. It is not just the nuclear family that has broken down, it is the extended family as well. And herein lies the chief danger: the breakdown in extended family also means the breakdown in extended safety nets designed to protect individuals from economic and/or moral ruin. Today we rely heavily on Government involvement to coordinate charity and basic welfare. Is this the result of the breakdown of the family and the influence of the Churches or is it the cause of those things?
- d. And now we get on to dangerous ground for we foray into political matters. Nevertheless, it is true to say that one of the chief political debates of our time is how to deal with the question of welfare. Reasonable men and women differ on this question. Some say, "Stay the course, the family and the Churches are not able or willing to help the poor. The family is not intact anyway." Others say, "Pull the plug. This will force people to turn to their families and neighbors and Churches again." Where ever one stands on this complex issue most will agree, that some correctives are needed to the present system; changes that will encourage families to work together: Changes that will encourage fathers to be present and accountable to the children they father; changes that will help turn the tide of illegitimacy.
- e. The biblical principle is clear: the family, (nuclear and extended) is the primary locus of charitable care and welfare. Verse 4 calls this a religious duty. It is not just a question of charity either, it is a question of justice. For again, as verse four tells us that parents deserve return for what they have provided in the Past. This is the full understanding of the commandment, "Honor your Father and your Mother." Honor in the biblical sense means more than "show respect," it also means, "provide for." The question is how to we get from the present system of a heavy government assumption of these duties that we presently have back to a family, community, Church based model? This is where politics really enters the scene and we must leave it there for the purposes of this class.

- f. Nevertheless for us as individuals the message is clear. We have a significant obligation to reach out and help needy family members. We ought to work hard to develop and maintain strong family ties: both nuclear and extended. We should strive to fulfill this responsibility to our family members and to rely on them in our own times of need in order the Church may be free to handle those in most profound need.
 - g. Paul goes further to suggest in verse 16 the formation of what we might call private beneficial societies. He suggests that widows band together and pool what resources they do have to help one another. This was a common feature in our own country before the Great Depression. Groups like the Knights of Columbus, the Knights of St. John, Elks Lodges, Ladies Auxiliaries, and Labor Unions were all ways that people came together to pool their resources and take care of one another in times of special need. All of this combined with the extended family and the Church to provide a rather extensive safety net. There is little doubt that the growth of the government welfare system is a symptom of the breakdown of the family, the local community and the churches. Hence, it seems reasonable to say that any solutions that trim government programs should, at the same time empower and enable families, churches and the local community to take up the slack. Pulling all of this off is of course easier said than done!
3. ***She who is a real widow, and is left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; {6} whereas she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. {7} Command this, so that they may be without reproach...{9} Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband; {10} and she must be well attested for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, relieved the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. {11} But refuse to enrol younger widows; for when they grow wanton against Christ they desire to marry, {12} and so they incur condemnation for having violated their first pledge. {13} Besides that, they learn to be idlers, gadding about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. {14} So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, rule their households, and give the enemy no occasion to revile us. {15} For some have already strayed after Satan.***
- a. ***She who is a real widow*** - from the economic standpoint then a real widow is one who is truly all alone with no male support of her own. Of these the Church has care.
 - b. Paul then goes on to state the criteria for enrolled widows.
 - c. Now a question arises here. There were likely widows who did not meet some or all of these criteria. Is Paul stating these as criteria for the aid of widows or merely as the criteria for allowing them to

be officially enrolled in the "office" of widow? The first criteria would seem to apply to all widows who accepted aid: **she who is self-indulgent** was not to receive help. Why should the Church squander money on a self-indulgent person. This would be a waste of money. But as for the Other criteria they come after the phrase **Let a widow be enrolled if** They be sixty years or older, married only once, devoted to prayer, noted for her good deeds, known for her hospitality and who had brought up well whatever children she may have had, and cared for the sick. Thus we need not conclude that a widow could qualify for assistance only if she met all the criteria listed by Paul. But to be enrolled she ought to meet them all. Again, we don't find an absolute answer either way. And yet it seems more likely that Paul is moving beyond the mere care of widows into a more formalized office or guild of widows who were to be officially honored and recognized as such. They would also be engaged in certain special works; this would involve charitable works especially. We know from the writings of the early Church Fathers that there were active groups of enrolled widows involved in charitable works and prayer in many places in the early Church. This would lend some credence to the theory that the strict requirements applied mainly to election to this group rather than to the distribution of alms.

- d. **washed the feet of the saints** - the washing of feet seems foreign to us and even demeaning but it was a common gesture of hospitality in the ancient world. (Gen 18:14; Luke 7:36ff; John 13:5). The saints, is another term used for fellow Christians.
- e. **But refuse to enrol younger widows** - Paul bases his decision on the fact that they will likely want to marry again. It is a rather curious passage in comparison with 1 Cor 7 which more than implies that younger people can receive the call to celibacy. Here however, Paul is less confident that the younger widows would endure since they would have to take a life-long vow of chastity to be enrolled as a widow. Perhaps he had already experienced some bad experiences. Also, in 1 Cor 7 the life of celibacy is not seen in terms of a vow, but here it is.
- f. **when they grow wanton against Christ** - the Greek verb translated here as "wanton" is difficult to understand or translate since it appears nowhere else in the New Testament. It is possible that Paul is referring to sexual desires which are stronger in younger persons. But it is more likely that he refers to youthful enthusiasm. If a young woman's readiness to enrol is due to passing emotion, this same romantic emotion may lead her away from Christ. Paul would then be describing a kind of depression and neglect of Christ which could happen when a person becomes lukewarm. In other words they reject the greater love of Christ (which they embraced by vow) for the love of marriage which, though good, is

less.

- g. Paul then goes on to suggest that young widows were prone to being gossips and busybodies. This may make us wince a bit since we hate stereotyping etc. today and it seems to uncover an "anti-woman" bias in Paul. Nevertheless, Paul does seem to base his remarks on real experience for he says, "Some have already strayed..." He also implies that the case was serious enough that that others would be given cause to revile the church. Note however that Paul would not merely have them "bare-foot and pregnant." He would also have them rule their households. Lastly, by implication Paul suggests that older widows were less likely to be gossips or busybodies. Hence, in a more positive sense he underscores the grace that comes with age.
- h. Another possible background for Paul's encouragement of marriage might be the background of the heresy Timothy is fighting. Recall that one of the tenets of the heretics was that they forbid marriage. Hence Paul, to counteract that message encourages marriage among the younger ones anyway.

C. Criteria for choosing elders (priests) - *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; {18} for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." {19} Never admit any charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. {20} As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. {21} In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without favor, doing nothing from partiality. {22} Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor participate in another man's sins; keep yourself pure. -*

1. **Elders** - the Greek word is *presbyteroi* - which can be translated as priest. Recall as we said earlier, the exact distinctions between Bishops and priests is not always clear in these earliest days. However, note here that we have the best distinction yet. They are men, chosen by the bishop (*episcopus*) after discernment and they receive the office by the laying on of hands. They are also under the bishop's authority. Although no mention is made of them in reference to the Eucharist, it is clear that they receive a mission to preach and teach. The elders also share in the same way the bishop's office of ruling but again they are under the bishop's authority and pleasure since he may have to discipline them in certain cases.
2. **double honor** - remember that, as we have said, honor involves more than respect in the ancient world, it also involved material recompense. Hence, Paul is saying they deserve double pay, whatever that means: double what? Double the pay due widows? Double the pay due other Church officials? And if so, why? He then quotes from Dt. 25:4 and Luke 10:7. It is interesting that he quotes from Luke 10 and calls it "scripture." Does this mean that a written form of the Gospel of Luke was already in circulation at the time this letter was written? We cannot say for sure but it

is surely implied. Another solution to this problem is to understand that, when Paul speaks of "double honor" he means to he is to be understood in both senses. That is, both respect and remuneration is due to the presbyters.

3. Paul also goes on to caution that charges against an elder should not be considered except on the testimony of two witnesses. Does this suggest that there were problems with the criticisms of elders in the early Church? Nevertheless, the advice is modelled on advice elsewhere in scripture: Dt 19:15 and Mt 18:16.
 4. Nevertheless, if the elder is guilty of the sin, he is to be publicly corrected so that the fear of the Lord may be augmented in the community. Further, any partiality in meeting out such punishments is to be strictly avoided lest the scandal be
 5. ***Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor participate in another man's sins*** - We are not given the criteria for men chosen to be priest as we had been given for deacons and widows. Nevertheless, Paul is clear that careful discernment is to be made before ordination. Perhaps he does not include the list of qualities since they are similar to the list of deacons. Some have interpreted the laying on of hands here as the act of absolution from sin, but this seems unlikely since this gesture in terms of the sacrament of penance is not attested to until the 3rd century. And yet, the second half of the phrase "nor participate in another man's sins" would seem to point to the hasty celebration of the sacrament of confession. Rather what Paul's seems to mean is that Timothy would be responsible for the sins of an unworthy priest, hastily ordained. We know, all too sadly today that priests who have strayed have cost the local church dearly in lawsuits.
- D. Personal advice to Timothy - ***No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. {24} The sins of some men are conspicuous, pointing to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. {25} So also good deeds are conspicuous; and even when they are not, they cannot remain hidden.***
1. ***No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments*** - This whole phrase is an obiter dicta (an aside by Paul) Remember that water in the ancient world was not treated as it is today. The quality of water varied greatly and frequently, bacteria made the drinking of unboiled water inadvisable. For this reason, wine was a much more common drink today than it is today. Paul evidently thinks Timothy would be advised to drink a little wine. Avoiding the water would avoid the source of water-born germs and the alcohol would presumably kill the bacteria. The background to this may be that Timothy was increasing his acts of penance. Paul advises that personal penances should not be so severe as to endanger one's health. The Venerable Msgr. Escriva writes, *How can a donkey work if it is not fed or given enough rest, or if its spirit is broken by too many beatings? Well, your body is like a little donkey...it has to be encouraged so that it can trot*

*along with all briskness...*²³

2. ***The sins of some men are conspicuous, pointing to judgment*** - Paul goes back to his main point. In effect he is continuing in his advising Timothy about the discernment necessary before ordaining priests. In some cases the sins of a man are obvious and the judgement against ordination is obvious.
3. ***the sins of others appear later***. In other words, the sins or unworthiness of the man for office may only appear later after much discernment.
4. ***So also good deeds*** - the same argument is true of good deeds. Even though a man may at first be seen as unfit for office and lacking in the qualities and good deeds necessary for office, these may appear later after further discernment. Thus again the argument is this: be slow to come to a judgement about a man in terms of whether to ordain him. The Second Vatican Council had this to say about the ordination of priests: *Due strictness should always be brought to bear on the choice and testing of seminary students. God will not allow his Church to lack ministers if the worthy are promoted.*²⁴

²³Friends of God, 137.

²⁴Optatam Totius, 6.

V. Chapter six

A. Slaves and their obligations - *Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be defamed. {2} Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brethren; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these duties.*

1. It is a difficult thing for modern eyes to behold a passage on slavery and not only that it is *not* condemned but that, in fact slaves are told to be obedient. And yet it may be said that slavery was so universally accepted in the ancient world that there are protests against the institution in all the literature of the ancient near east. Hence, slavery was simply an accepted fact of life, almost unreflected on at a moral level at all.
2. The chief source of slaves in the ancient world was prisoners of war. During, or at the end of wars, slaves were collected and then sold. Hebrews were permitted to own slaves but they were not permitted to enslave another Hebrew. Another source of slaves were unwanted infants, usually girls, who were left in the open to die. What usually happened was that brothel owners or slavers collected these unwanted infants and raised and then sold them or hired them out as prostitutes. This practice was rare, if ever, among the Jews but not at all uncommon among the Gentiles. Another rarer source of slaves was that a person voluntarily sold themselves into slavery in order to overcome some debt. (Ex 21:1-6; Dt 15:12ff; Lv 25:35ff)²⁵ Sometimes parents even sold their own children

25Exodus 21:1-6 (RSV) "Now these are the ordinances which you shall set before them. {2} When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing. {3} If he comes in single, he shall go out single; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. {4} If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's and he shall go out alone. {5} But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' {6} then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for life.

Deuteronomy 15:12-18 (RSV) "If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. {13} And when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty-handed; {14} you shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your wine press; as the LORD your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. {15} You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today. {16} But if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you, {17} then you shall take an awl, and thrust it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your bondman for ever. And to your bondwoman you shall do likewise. {18} It shall not seem hard to you, when you let him go free from you; for at half the cost of a hired servant he has served you six years. So the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.

into slavery in order to meet indebtedness. There was a six year limit slavery for indebtedness after which the slave had the option of freedom or the acceptance of perpetual slavery. Yet another source of slaves were criminals, especially thieves who could not restore the goods they stole. (Ex 22:3). The slave was legally property and had no rights. Male and female slaves were mated, not married and their children were the property of the owner. Injury done to slave was penalized by damages being paid to the owner. Most slaves were tattooed or marked in some physical way to distinguish them. Hebrew Law did not permit the killing of a slave as did some of the Gentile laws (Ex 21:20ff). The slave who was seriously injured by his owner might be freed according to Hebrew Law. The position of a female slave could be that of a concubine. Any female slave could be used for the sexual pleasure of her master if she had been acquired for that purpose. If this were the case, certain rules regulated the relationship. Such a woman had no right to be freed after six years unless her owner deprived her of food, clothing, or if her owner married another woman. If a man acquired a concubine from the prisoners of war, he must either marry or free her and she was not to be later sold or mistreated (Dt 21:10-14)²⁶. Fugitive slaves were punished severely but less severely than those who assisted them. The numbers of slaves in the ancient world is difficult to estimate. However, there were less of them among the Jews than the Gentiles. Among the Jews they were about 1/7th of the population (cf Ne 7:67)²⁷. However, among the Greeks and Romans there were times when the number reached as high as fifty percent of the population. While the Slave was legally considered property, it was not that there was never any human solidarity expressed of them. Many ancient documents exhort kind treatment of them as does our text here. The Book of Deuteronomy frequently reminds the Israelites that they were once slaves and that they should thus deal with their slaves humanely (eg Dt 5:15; 15:15) Houseborn slaves were both socially and legally in a different position than slaves who were purchased. The Houseborn slave was considered a member of the family and was frequently charged with the running of the home. Frequently they ate with the rest of the family

²⁶Deuteronomy 21:10-14 (RSV) "When you go forth to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God gives them into your hands, and you take them captive, {11} and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you have desire for her and would take her for yourself as wife, {12} then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and pare her nails. {13} And she shall put off her captive's garb, and shall remain in your house and bewail her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her, and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. {14} Then, if you have no delight in her, you shall let her go where she will; but you shall not sell her for money, you shall not treat her as a slave, since you have humiliated her.

²⁷Nehemiah 7:66-67 (RSV) The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, besides their menservants and maidservants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five singers, male and female.

and could even inherit the whole estate if the owner died without a male heir. Likewise, house born slaves were considered of Jewish faith, thus they had a Sabbath rest, were circumcised, and took part in religious festivals and activities. In the new Testament as a whole, slaves are mentioned casually and Jesus even uses them as a good example indicating that the one who wishes to rank higher must be the slave of all (Mt 20:27)²⁸.

3. Those who are dis-satisfied with the neutrality of the New Testament must recall the basic character of Christian social reform. which does not attack the institution directly but, rather, undermines its basis by attacking the principle of inequality upon which slavery was based. The slave need not seek liberty for he already a freedman by the Lord as the owner is the slave of the Lord (1 Cor 7:21-23)²⁹. There is no distinction between slave and free (1 Co 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11)³⁰. All these insights would eventually serve to undermine and destroy the tolerance for slavery. In this light Christianity may be seen as a destroyer of the institution of slavery since it served to remove the premises of it as acceptable.
4. Further, as we have said in class at least verbally before, the institution of slavery as it had evolved in the Americas was different in several ways from the slavery during Biblical times. In biblical times the roots of slavery were alternatives to death. Prisoners of war, instead of being killed were enslaved. Petty criminals (eg thieves) instead of being jailed, worked off their sentences in slavery. Debtors too could avoid jail by selling themselves into slavery. And, as tragic and awful as it is to consider, exposed infants, though enslaved did live rather than die by exposure or being devoured by wild animals. Perhaps the most startling aspect of slavery in the ancient world was when parent would sell their children into slavery to cover debts. Yet, this was usually regulated somewhat strictly and had the quality of adoption as much as slavery. None of this is to deny that there was cruelty in the ancient system and that slaves possessed little

28Matthew 20:26-28 (RSV) It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

291 Corinthians 7:21-23 (RSV) Were you a slave when called? Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity. {22} For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. {23} You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

301 Corinthians 12:13 (RSV) For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Galatians 3:28 (RSV) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:11 (RSV) Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

or no rights, but there was a context of some mercy in that death or jail was often avoided through its auspices. The slavery that came to develop in the Americas however took on a different tone altogether. Most Africans were exploited because they were vulnerable at the time. Further, cheap labor was needed. Many Europeans falsely assumed all Africans were Moslems. This permitted them to enslave the Africans for two reasons: 1. The Moslems were an on-going enemy of the Christian Europeans. Hence they could regard all Africans as prisoners of War. Enslaving them was a form of pre-emptive strike. 2. Since they were Moslems, to enslave them meant they could be brought to the Christian faith. But the assumption of all Africans as Moslem was erroneous. Most Africans of North Africa were Moslem after the 6th Century. However, further south this was simply not the case. The bottom line for most was simply greed. The sub-Saharan Africans provided a vulnerable and cheap source of laborers and they were exploited. They had committed no crimes, owed no debt, and were not at war with Europe. This was obviously immoral. People however, continued to use the word slavery for this activity and words are important. After all, slavery had been around forever. The word did not provoke deep reflection and the fact that some were enslaved was nothing new. It took a long time and the preaching of many priests, ministers and Popes to convey to open up the eyes that something different was going on here. Many were obviously not convinced and it resulted in the bloodiest war this country has ever known.

5. All of this is to set a context for the lack of direct biblical condemnation of the institution of slavery.
 - a. The slavery of biblical times had different qualities.
 - b. The Bible did set the moral context for the eventual critique and condemnation of slavery by boldly proclaiming the equality of every human being before God.
6. Finally let us simply gather all of Paul's thoughts on slaves together:
 - a. Titus 2:9-10 (RSV) Bid slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to be refractory, {10} nor to pilfer, but to show entire and true fidelity, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 7:21-22 (RSV) Were you a slave when called? Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity. {22} For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ.
 - c. Ephesians 6:5-8 (RSV) Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ; {6} not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, {7} rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men, {8} knowing that whatever good any one does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

- d. Colossians 3:22-25 (RSV) Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord. {23} Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, {24} knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ. {25} For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.
7. ***Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor*** - This continues the basic theme that Paul has developed all along: respect; especially respect for elders and those in lawful authority. The fact that he refers to them as under a yoke indicates his sympathy for them. Nevertheless, their duty is to bear it patiently and honorably. Paul speak generally in calling them worthy of honor. There might be an individual master unworthy of honor but even in this case it would not do the slave any good to resist, he would come only to harm. Considered in a vacuum Paul's words seem hard for us. How can a slave master be worthy of anything, let alone honor?! But recalling the cultural context which we discussed above it is perhaps more understandable. Recall that many were under the yoke of slavery due to crimes or financial debt. Hence masters are to be honored. Remember too, honor means more than respect. Honor also included the fulfillment of one's duties to another. Hence, honoring parents means more than respecting them. It also means supporting them in their old age. Here too honoring the master meant more than respecting. It also meant working hard to accomplish the tasks expected (within reason) by the master.
8. ***so that the name of God and the teaching may not be defamed.*** - Here Paul gives his reason. He does not want the Christian Church to be a source of social unrest where this can be avoided. Recall back in Acts how careful Luke was to paint a picture of the members of the Church as good citizens who sought only to follow the God who make them virtuous. There is a delicate balance here. The Church must proclaim the truth, in season and out of season. She must also work for justice. But how and when this is done varies. As we have seen, in the cultural context of the time, slavery was an accepted fact by most. There is however a limit that Christians must impose on one another as we have seen already that flows from the spiritual fraternity of all Christians. Thus Master and Slave must regard one another as brothers and act in such a way. All are equal before God. Later, as the slavery degraded the time would be ripe for the Church to critique and finally forbid the slave trade. This was done prior to the Civil War to the Civil War in 1839 by Pope Gregory XVI condemned slavery and forbade any Catholic to defend or teach anything that supported the slave trade.³¹

³¹Unfortunately his encyclical *Supremo Apostolatus Fastigio* was ignored or interpreted out of existence by many Bishops in the US. Some of these southern bishops in fact owned slaves. Nevertheless other bishops staunchly promoted the Pope's letter and saw that it was well publicized.

9. ***Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brethren.*** Since the Church encouraged slave masters to regard their Christian slaves as brothers it might be possible that the slave would take liberties with this and put the master in an awkward position. Paul discourages such presumptuous behavior and urges the exact opposite: ***rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved.***
10. ***Teach and urge these duties*** - Again, recall that slavery was part of the social order of the time, and not for only sinful reasons. Hence Paul is calling in general for the preservation of and respect for the social order and urges Timothy not to ask for trouble by allowing either masters or slaves to forget their obligations. All of this is startling to us from our perspective but recall, it was a somewhat different system. Abuses in the slave system were not uncommon but Paul is presuming an otherwise proper relationship. His basic argument is, "Other things being equal, slaves, accept your lot, respect your master and work hard. In so doing you will win for yourself a merited crown."

B. False teachers described - ***If any one teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching which accords with godliness, {4} he is puffed up with conceit, he knows nothing; he has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, {5} and wrangling among men who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. {6} There is great gain in godliness with contentment; {7} for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; {8} but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. {9} But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. {10} For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs.***

1. Again, Paul takes up the question of the false teachers. His description is similar to the one in Chapter one. However, the distinctive trait here is that he mentions that they are concerned with material gain.
2. Paul declares that the false teacher is:
 - a. ***puffed up with conceit*** - He desires not to display Christ, but himself. He is more concerned with fame and a large following than the truth of the Gospel. It is also the height of conceit to think that one is to teach anything other than the revealed truth of the Gospel.
 - b. ***knows nothing*** - In his ignorance he confuses things and gets the cart before the horse. He thinks that what he thinks is what God thinks. Instead, what he should do is discover what God reveals and teach that.
 - c. ***has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words which produce:*** - discussion of doctrine and the finer points

of theology does not necessarily make one a saint. Some people thrive for debates and love controversial discussion. Their chief joy is to win the argument rather than discover or deepen their knowledge of truth. This is a danger in academia. It is also a danger in our news media which emphasizes differences, controversies and focuses more on the negative aspects of our culture than the positive. And we the consumer of such news also tend to favor disputes and controversies. Paul refers to the craving as a morbid one in that it is death directed which is the opposite of the spirit which gives life. The life giving gospel seeks to unite people in the truth. Heresies however, divide the faithful and are thus disunifying, and act to decay unity, hence they are morbid. Disunity and controversy, if they are not held in check ultimately lead to strife, war and death.

d. ***disputes about words*** - words do have meaning and those who control the vocabulary frequently control thought. Our modern age has developed a real knack for watering down the reality of things through a softening of the language. For example Abortion becomes "choice" Fornication becomes "premarital sex" or an "Alternative lifestyle." Hence, the focus shifts to the words rather than the where the focus belongs: the truth the words convey. Surely, sensitivity is important in word usage but ultimately the truth must not be disguised.

e. All of this leads to

(1) ***envy*** - envy is sorrow at the good or truth I see in another. I should delight in the gifts, talents and insights of someone else. However, many, (and Paul assigns this fault to the false teacher), are reactionary when someone else other than they announce the truth. Instead of being happy that a point has been clarified, or better illustrated, they become sad. Such is the lot of many who cave for controversy. They will never be satisfied once the truth has been proclaimed to them because they themselves did not say it and they, after all, are the measure of all truth!

(2) ***dissension*** - dissension arises when some people will not moderate their views or change them according to the measure the truth. This leads to division. In many arguments people simply dig in their heels and refuse to move. This is why our Lord did not set the Church up as a discussion club. Rather, he set it up as a college of apostles headed by Peter (later succeeded by the popes and bishops) who were to authoritatively teach and discern in His name. The heretic however refuses to be submitted to any authority and he himself becomes the measure of truth.

(3) ***slander*** - After envy and dissension comes the name calling: "Liberal, Conservative, reactionary, radical", etc.

But slander moves beyond name calling and seeks to destroy the character of the opponent: "He is not just misinformed, he hates widows and orphans too!" ... "And! He drinks too much as well...!"

- (4) **base suspicions** - Frequently when we put people in a box, we make assumptions about how they think about certain matters or what they are up to. We stereotype them and even presume they are plotting against us. Distrust is the natural result of dissension and slander. Our enemy is out to get us...we think.
- (5) **and wrangling** - again, there is a competition for the attentions of the crowd and the heretic struggles to control the agenda.
- (6) **depravity of mind** - to be depraved is to be deprived of something. In this case, the heretic, because his mind is not informed by the gospel, is deprived of a sound mind and his reasoning becomes flawed, as Paul wrote in Romans *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. {19} For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. {20} Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; {21} for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. {22} Claiming to be wise, they became fools, {23} and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. {24} Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, {25} because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen. Romans 1:18-25*
- (7) **bereft of the truth** - to deny the truth of the gospel is to forfeit all truth. There are not many different truths. There is only one truth. The Gospel is not just one opinion of the world among many, it is *the* truth proclaimed by the God. The opposite of the true is false, not "different." Many today falsely suppose that there can be many competing systems of truth and this is Ok and shows tolerance. Well, maybe it shows tolerance but there remains only one truth and we should not be so open minded that our brain falls out. Either he have the truth or we don't. By definition, "A"

and "Not A" cannot both be true statements. One or the other must be right.

- f. The False teachers also commercialize religion - ***imagining that godliness is a means of gain.*** - teaching and preaching is not a vocation but a career. The passion of the true preacher is to give not to get. Paul's response to the "prosperity gospel" is ***if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content.*** These are difficult words for us to hear today in such a commercialized world! We think we need a lot more and to a certain extent this is true. We are expected to have a means of transportation, communication and information sources. Our modern world places many demands upon us that make our lifestyle very stressful, complicated and expensive. Because of our expensive standard of living we have to earn quite an income to subsidize it. This means many work longer hours and end up getting things backwards: we live to work rather than work to live. Perhaps we should take Paul's advice, be satisfied with less, and live more simply and peacefully. Only those who are poor in spirit can expect to be blessed by God: *for he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.* Luke 1:52-53
- g. ***those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.*** - Although Paul may be explicitly referring to those who preach for a profit, his advice is good for each of us. The desire for wealth is a common one among most of us. Wealth, comfort and security are all to be desired but they are often, if not usually, sought inordinately. Greed may best be defined as the insatiable desire for more. On account of greed, many will steal, cheat, or do just about anything. This of course drives them to ruin. The allure of wealth and its empty promises are only too clear in our own day and age. It is frequently believed that "if I just had more money or certain possessions I'd be happy" But this is a lie. We live in perhaps the most affluent society the world has ever known. and yet, at least collectively, we live in a state of social breakdown. Many live in fear. Moral corruption, confusion, addiction, crime, the breakdown of the family, greed, lust, envy and strife abound. The list could go on, but our collective excesses have bloated us and we are out of shape morally and spiritually. Even the smallest sacrifices seem beyond our grasp. To a degree, we have become enslaved by the need for comfort, diversion, and pleasure. We speak of rights but never mention duties. And we have been plunged into the many hurtful and senseless desires. We know only too well how lust has destroyed our age: teenage pregnancy, abortion, Venereal diseases, and AIDS abound. Marriage has been struck a mortal blow in this age of lust. Further,

many other addictions abound: not just to drugs and alcohol but to television, food, fads, and fashions and material pleasures. The social price for maintaining such a lifestyle is high indeed. In order to fund the fulfillment of their excessive and hurtful desires many have to work long hours. Both parents must work and children are lost in the frenzy, marriages break up and many deal with high levels of stress and fatigue. And all for what: a fancier car, in a better neighborhood, with all the amenities of life and then some. The desire for security, comfort and a reasonable standard of life are not evil, but St. Paul speaks here of the excessive desire to be rich in this world's goods. It is a slippery slope indeed. St. Augustine put it well when he said: *When lust is served, it becomes custom, and when custom is not resisted it becomes necessity.*³² Thus it is today that many declare that it is unrealistic to preach chastity, or abstinence as a way to put sexually transmitted diseases behind us. Many simply can imagine a freedom that radical. Hence, hurtful passion plunges our society into the ruin of a new slavery.

- h. ***For the love of money is the root of all evils*** - note carefully how this phrase is worded. it does not say that money is the root of all evils. It says that the *love* of money is the root of all evils. Obviously here, the Christian must make use of money just as the Church must. But money is not our goal or our God. Right use of money can be a part of holiness while unrighteous use of it can bring us ruin and condemnation. *And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal habitations. {10} "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. {11} If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches? {12} And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? Luke 16:9-12*

- C. An appeal to defend the faith - ***But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. {12} Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. {13} In the presence of God who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, {14} I charge you to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; {15} and this will be made manifest at the proper time by the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, {16} who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.***

³²Confessions VIII, 5 Dum servitur libidini, facta est consuetudo: et dum consuetudini non resistitur, facta est necessitas.

1. **man of God** - this is an exalted title use of Moses and the prophets in the old Testament (Dt 33:1; 1 Sam 2:27; i Kings 12:22; 13:1 etc). and like these great figures of the Old Testament, Timothy is dedicated to the service of God. In effect the title of honor is meant to evoke a sense of duty and reverence in Timothy for his duty. Whereas Timothy may look upon his weakness, Paul reminds him of his honor and grace and seeks to evoke a confident response in him.
2. Timothy is to aim at **righteousness** - (Greek *dikaiosune*) is defined as giving to both man and God their due. It is the most comprehensive of virtues.
3. He is also to aim toward three virtues that look toward God:
 - a. **godliness** - (Greek *eusebeia*) is the reverence of a person who never ceases to remember that he lives in the presence of God.
 - b. **faith** - (Greek *pistis*) here means fidelity and refers to the person who, no matter what may come (good or bad) remains loyal to God
 - c. **love** - (Greek *agape*) - the highest form of love wherein a person loves God, unconditionally as the highest good in his life.
4. **steadfastness** (Greek *hupomone*) - means victorious endurance. It means unswerving constancy to faith and piety in spite of suffering and adversity.
5. **gentleness** - (Greek *paupatheia*) it is really difficult to translate this Greek word. It describes a spirit which never blazes into anger unreasonably due to the sins of others but does blaze with the righteous indignation due to injustice. It describes the spirit that knows how to forgive, yet also wages a battle for righteousness. It is a spirit which walks, at once in humility but also with a sense of its high calling of a prophetic office.
6. **Fight the good fight of the faith** - Spiritual warfare is a common theme in Christianity and Paul develops it elsewhere:
 - a. 1 Cor 9:26 - Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.
 - b. 2 Tim 4:7 - I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
7. Paul then compares what he expects of Timothy by comparing it to what Jesus did before Pontius Pilate: **Christ Jesus who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession** - Christ stood by the truth of what he had said and who he was in spite of the death that inevitably awaited him. So too must Timothy be ready to stand by the truth of Gospel and proclaim its truth at a high price if necessary. Likewise he must acknowledge the Lordship of Christ over all things even if this means a price must be paid. This will all involve struggle. Within himself Timothy must struggle to realize the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Likewise he must seek by God's grace to realize this in others. This too involves a struggle for people do not always accept the truth with pleasantness and peace. Nevertheless, it must be proclaimed and herein lies the fight. Further, as St. Paul reminds us, the powers and principalities of darkness also wage war on us and for this reason too we must be ready to fight the

- good fight not only of faith but *with* faith.
8. ***when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses***
This most likely refers to Timothy's baptism rather than his ordination since the word confession is used.
 9. ***keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach*** - the Greek word *entole* (commandment) is the complete deposit of faith that has been entrusted to Timothy. The fact that it is called commandment is a way of underscoring the fact that the Gospel truths are not a matter of opinion or suggestion. They are the truth and the truth must always be obeyed. Timothy is told to keep it unstained and free from reproach. Does this refer to Timothy himself or to the deposit? Possibly both. The deposit of faith is keep unstained by keeping it free of human additions. The shepherd of souls must always be careful to avoid interjecting his own opinions or interpretations on doctrine. He must not teach as doctrine what is mere opinion, nor must he teach that doctrine is mere opinion. The well-trained preacher can and must know the distinction and limitations of both extremes. The magisterium of the Church guides us, but even within this protective realm, some may stray. To keep the commandment free from reproach again means that it be held in its fullness and with everything in proper balance. Frequently, if one truth is emphasized over and against another, the whole system can fall out of balance and begin to look absurd. This places Christianity in a false light and reject not Christianity, but a caricature of Christianity.
 10. The phrase unstained and free from reproach may also refer to Timothy himself. His life is to be a living Gospel and if he does not conduct himself well, the faith is reproached. If he does conduct himself well however, the faith will be more highly respected.
 11. ***until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*** - Was Paul expecting an imminent return of our Lord? Probably not, since in other places (e.g. Colossians) he cautions against speculations. Nevertheless, Timothy and Paul lived in the very same situation we do: Christ could well return in our lifetime, and then again, he may not. But he will appear to us, either way for when we pass from this life we shall appear before him for judgement. The point is this, we live in the Last Days, and have been doing so for the last 2000 years. We must be ready. Paul's commission to Timothy to hold fast to the content of faith is also the Word of God to the Church which must guard, proclaim and defend the sacred deposit of faith until the end of time.
 12. ***the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, {16} who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.*** - These lines have the quality of an ancient hymn and Paul is likely quoting from it. In suggesting that Christ alone has immortality Paul does not mean to suggest that we do not. Rather, it is that we participate in the immortality of Christ by being made members of his body. Likewise to say that no can ever see him, must refer to our state in

this world for Paul does teach elsewhere that we shall see him, face to face, e.g: 1 Corinthians 13:12 *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood..*

- D. The right way to use wealth - ***As for the rich in this world, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy. {18} They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous, {19} thus laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed.***
1. Paul makes several points about the materially rich
 - a. God has furnished them with what they enjoy. Implicitly then, should be very thankful to God.
 - b. They should not be proud, for God is the giver of every good gift.
 - c. Riches are uncertain. Fortunes change, wars, natural disasters, market fluctuations, elastic supply and demand, etc all impact on wealth. The wealthiest and most powerful nations of the earth at any given time have all passed on into oblivion and been replaced by other nations. It is the same with individuals who can loose everything, sometimes through their fault, sometimes through matters beyond their control. Our Lord told parables about wealth worth recalling at this point
 - (1) Luke 12:16-21 And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; {17} and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' {18} And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. {19} And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' {20} But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' {21} So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
 - (2) Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
 - d. Following on what the Lord has already said in the parable, the wealthy should use their wealth for the good of others. This would include not only direct donations but also by the proper investment and use of that money to found businesses that generate jobs and wealth centers that can benefit others and provide opportunity.
 - e. The real life not the "good life" but eternal life. Most of us if we

really consider this know it is true: heaping up material things does not lead to the happiness promised. Yet too many still go along that course. True life is found only in Christ who is the Way the Truth and the Life.

W. Epilogue - *O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge, {21} for by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith. Grace be with you.*

A. A fitting conclusion. Each phrase has already been commented upon, and thus we shall let the conclusion speak for itself.